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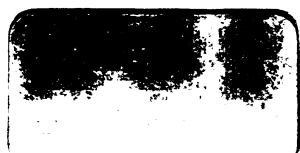
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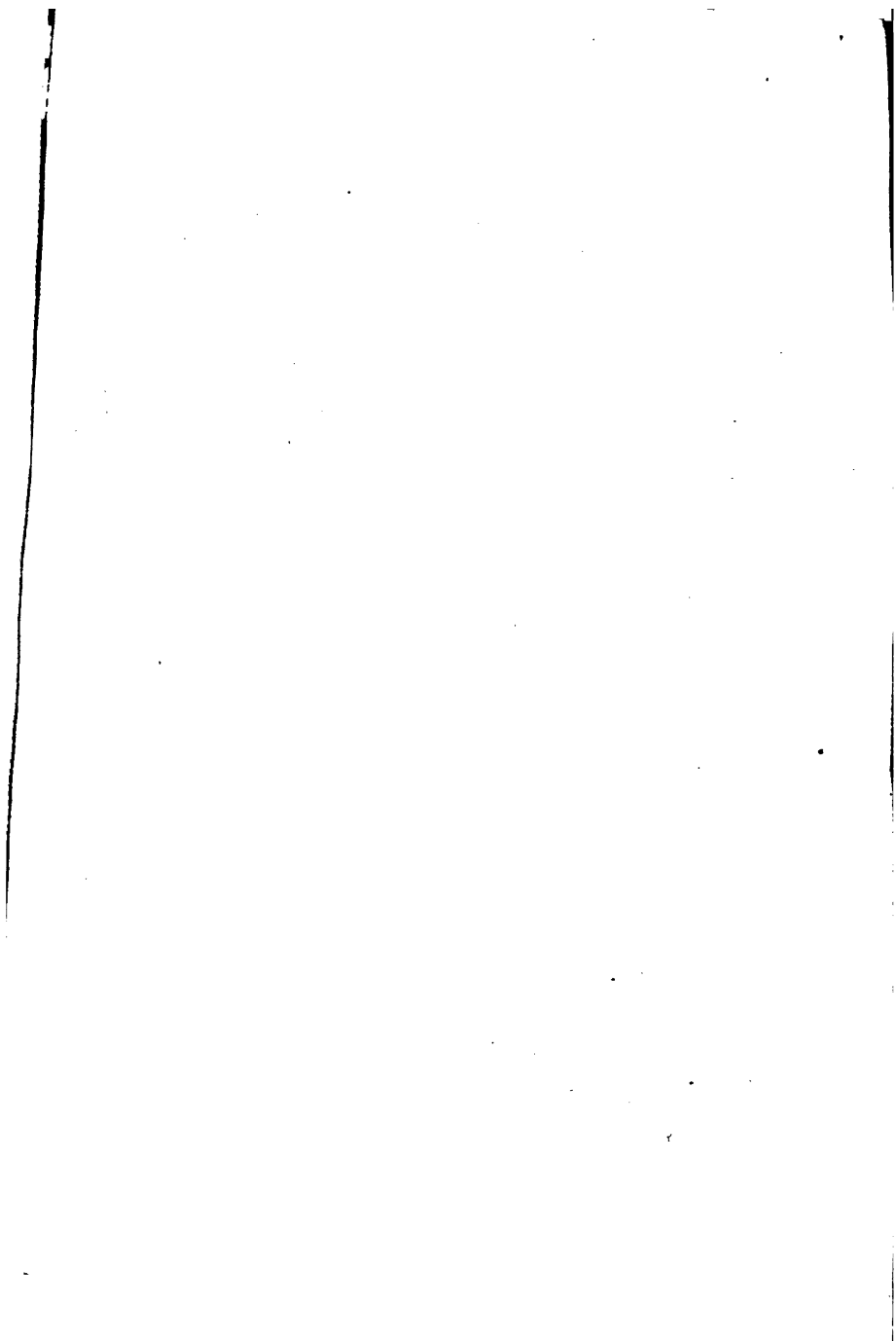
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LEO BERTRAM;

OR,

THE BRAVE HEART.

FROM THE GERMAN OF FRANZ ^{Hoffmann} HOFFMAN.

BY

E. T. DISOSWAY.

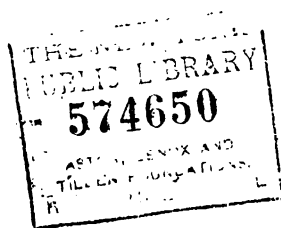
"There are briers besetting every path,
Which call for patient care—
There is a cross in every lot,
And an earnest need for prayer,
But a lowly heart that leans on Thee
Is happy anywhere."

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

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LEO BERTRAM.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOUSE ON THE SHORE.

"PRESS on, Willy; more to the right. There—so we will not strike the sand. So, my boy. Now we have our fine supply in. How delighted mother will be, for she need have no further anxiety for a week at least. I will get three thalers for these in Bremen, I do not doubt, for they are splendid fellows. Only look, Willy, at these perch; one alone must weigh nine or ten pounds; and there are the others besides, and all the shellfish—they will sell well. Fasten the chain in its place, Willy; wind it around the stake a couple of times, hook it, and then help me carry the fish to the house."

These words were spoken by a fine lad of nineteen to his younger brother. They had been out fishing. The appearance of the boat, upon which a pile of nets was lying, and the garb of the two brothers betokened their trade very plainly, and there were also proofs testifying to their skill and success, as they loaded themselves with the spoils. Willy would have taken the oars also with him, but his brother objected. "Leave them there," he said; "I must start for Bremen at day-break to-morrow; no one will trouble the oars to-night—at least I advise them not to."

Willy threw them back in the boat, and followed his brother's rapid steps along the shore, until they turned to the right, and saw a one-story tiled-roof house standing in a thick grove of trees.

Perhaps our readers some time may have seen a house so home-like and attractive in its appearance that they have exclaimed involuntarily, "I would willingly pass my life there;" and this cottage, the home of the brothers, would have prepossessed you in its favor.

The sun was sinking fast, its disk already touched the surface of the sea, the atmosphere was mild, and the reflection of the sky fell on the rippling waves through a transparent film. A few rosy clouds floated in the air, and on the mirror of the water glittered some sails whose dazzling whiteness contrasted finely against the brilliantly-dyed western sky as they sailed like gigantic swans across the billows.

The sun's last rays flashed over the sea like a great sword, and sent a farewell to the little house on the shore. The polished clear windows blazed in the light as it stole through the wild grapevine that surrounded and formed a natural and pleasant drapery for the windows. It was in the first part of the month of May; everything was green, the trees as well as the bushes. The flowers in the garden were waking into fresh life and beauty, and the little house was nestled in the midst. A splendid linden overshadowed it with its great branches stretching far out to the right and the left. The flourishing garden was filled with alders, crimson crocuses, blue lilacs, and

white snowballs, and the birches rose behind the garden with their silver-white slender stems. The delicate boughs, and millions of bright green leaves fluttering in the evening wind, formed a pretty picture as the sun glanced upon it and wove golden threads among the luxuriant foliage. Yes, it was an attractive house—small, peaceful, and secluded, but large enough for its contented occupants, the good mother Martha and her two sons, Leo and Willy. And its fine situation, with the splendid view of the sea, with its many changes and thousand-fold beauties, made it still more attractive.

Leo threw down his burden before the house, breathed heavily, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. "Bring the rest of the fish in, Willy," he said to his brother; "I will run back and attend to the nets. Tell mother I will soon return. Do you hear?"

Willy nodded, and Leo rapidly retraced his steps to the shore, and met on his way an elderly man dressed in dark clothes, who asked abruptly, "Does Martha Bertram live in yonder little house?"

Leo regarded the stranger attentively, and hesitated before answering, wondering to himself what this man could want of his mother. "You must be dumb, or perhaps you do not know who lives there," said the stranger, with some impatience.

"I ought to know where my mother lives," replied Leo. "Go right on; if she is not in the house, you will probably find her in the garden, or Willy may show you the way. I would go with you myself, but I must see to hanging the nets for drying, or they will become mildewed."

The man turned into the path leading to the house without another word, and Leo ran to the shore, threw the nets over his shoulders, not without some difficulty, and quickly returned, wondering in the mean time over the object of this visit to his mother. He would have left the nets until later, but it was a duty that could not be postponed, and must be attended to before any other; so he despatched his work with a dextrous hand, and when it was completed he went into the house, and finding Willy in the front room, at once

questioned him about the stranger and his mother.

"He is in the arbor," replied Willy.

"Do you know what brought him here?"

"No, Leo; I only know this much: his pocket was filled with papers which he spread out on the table."

"Humph! Another time I will look farther," thought Leo. "The man did not please me; he was mighty short dealing with me when I met him on my way to the nets. I hope he will not make mother any trouble, but he shall understand that I am not to be trifled with."

"Be quiet, dear brother," said Willy. "Mother sent me from the garden when the man came, and she would not be willing to have you go there. See, I believe he has already gone."

"That is so," said Leo, looking from the window. "Now I will ask mother what wind brought him here."

He ran to the garden. His mother was still sitting in the arbor, but not busily employed with her work as usual. She was rest-

ing her head upon her hand, apparently deeply absorbed in painful thoughts. The net she had been mending lay half finished by her side, and on the table before her a paper upon which her eyes were fixed. She started when she saw Leo, and endeavored to conceal this; but it was too late; he saw it, and also noticed her anxiety and dejection.

"What has occurred, dear mother?" exclaimed Leo excitedly. "You are weeping. What did that man want? He cannot be far off; if he has worried you, I will follow him and make him beg your pardon on his knees."

"No, no, Leo," answered his mother, seizing his hand. "The man is innocent of any offence; he has only done his duty in bringing me some very sad news. Let him go in peace, my son."

"And what may this news be?" questioned Leo. "It must be trouble indeed if it forces tears from you. Oh, do not withhold it from me, dear mother; you know well you may confide in me."

"It would be useless to try and conceal it from you, my son," she replied. "In a few

weeks you would know all, and then the blow would only be harder to bear, for if you are unprepared it will fall more severely. Leo, a wicked man, who has already given us great trouble, will take away from us our house and turn us out without pity."

Leo was shocked, but tried to conceal his feelings. "Who is this man?" he asked angrily; "and has he any right to deprive us of our inheritance? If he has no right, and yet the law is on his side, he shall see that I will have something to do with him."

"He has the might, my child, even if I doubt his right," said his mother, shaking her head hopelessly. "The law has once before decided in his favor, and I fear it will do so again in this case. Ah, if he would only leave me this house as a last refuge, where we have lived for so many years contented and happy; and the garden where your dear father sleeps his last sleep. It will break my heart to leave it, for I can no longer pray beside his resting-place and deck his grave with flowers."

"Never, no, never shall you be driven

from it, mother, if I can prevent it!" said Leo, with deep emotion. "Indeed, he must be a wicked man who would rob a poor widow of her all. But how can this be done, mother? for the house and garden belong to you."

"I always hoped and believed this was so, my son; but the stranger who has just left us has taken away all hope. Leo, this is a sad story, and you may as well hear it now as at any other time. Your father, as you know, was a shipmaster. He owned a small house in Bremen, and also a boat; and with this help he earned his bread honestly. Oh, that he had never wished to better a lot with which we were all so contented! But listen: When you were seven years old, and Willy two, a tempter came to your father and persuaded him to sell his boat and invest the proceeds of the sale in a vessel. The man who made the suggestion proposed to provide whatever should be necessary in furnishing the vessel, and that each should have an equal share of the profits. The proposal seemed tempting enough, and in fact some

money was made, and with a portion of that your father bought this house and garden, in order to use it as headquarters in lading and discharging the cargo of the vessel; and as the situation and fine view of the sea were so attractive, he spent his summers here. Now, as you can certainly remember, your father became very ill, and it was necessary to give the command of the ship to another person; and, unhappily, soon after the ship and cargo were wrecked in a fearful storm. When the news came, it is true, your father was distressed, but still he was not discouraged, for he said to me, 'The accident is not so terrible as it appears, for the ship and cargo were fully insured, and in a year's time, with industry, we can make up for this disaster if I regain my health.' Ah, in the mysterious wisdom of God, this wish was not granted. Whether your father was more overcome by the news of the shipwreck than he was willing to acknowledge, or whether his illness was augmented by some other cause, God only knows. He was attacked with violent fever, lost his recollection, and in a few weeks

after the loss of the vessel God called him to himself. That was a hard blow for me, Leo. You and your brother were too young to realize it, but it fell upon me so heavily I would have followed him willingly, only for the consciousness that I must care for you, poor orphans, and that was my only consolation. But this was not all. God placed a harder cross upon me; another blow was in store, of which I had not the slightest suspicion. Having heard what your dear father had said, I believed that we would not have to struggle for the necessities of life, as the vessel was fully insured, and belonged partly to me. At least, I should have the house in Bremen and the small one in which we live; but before many weeks passed away, not hearing from your father's partner, I wrote, begging him to settle the affairs with me, for I had you and Willy to provide for; and then he answered very curtly that I had not the slightest claim upon him, and that as the ship had been insured entirely at his own cost, I had no right to any share of its valuation. He also said he had other claims

upon your father, and threatened to prosecute me for them if I did not leave him in peace. I now considered it my duty to secure legal advice, but my lawyer gave me little hope. 'That man is a villain,' he said. 'If your husband still lived, he would not dare to make this assertion; but now he can do so, because there is no written proof to deny his falsehood, and he who leaves the path of honesty to serve Mammon will find ways and means for carrying out his designs, and very often time is not long enough to prove who has the right. He may escape an earthly judge, but not the heavenly.'

"I questioned the lawyer as to what should be done, and we decided to bring a suit against this dishonest man. But it all happened as the lawyer had predicted; the rascal produced papers and swore to their validity, and the judge was compelled to decide in his favor, although he and we all believed in our secret hearts that he had perjured himself. But the contempt he received prevented him from presenting at the time another claim which he intended to establish, and he withdrew it.

I was obliged to sell the house in Bremen to pay for the expense of the lawsuit, and try and provide for my children until they were old enough to earn their own bread ; and with God's help I have succeeded. The money is gone, it is true ; but with your fish trade, dear Leo, you have kept us from want, and we might have lived on peaceful and contented, if this man had not disturbed our happiness. He asserts that your father owed him three hundred thalers, and if I cannot pay this our house and garden must be sold.

"This is what I have learned from the man who has just left ; and I am in deep distress, for the law will decide on the side of dishonesty, and we, poor and helpless, must be turned out of doors. Oh, what will become of us if this man should also take your boat and nets, and deprive you of all means of support ? for so far they have protected us from poverty."

"Mother, as long as I live that shall never happen," said Leo, with indignation. "I will see who can tear our possessions from us—my possessions, I say, for the nets and tackle

are mine, honestly gained by hard work. Grieve no more, dear mother. I will go to the city to-morrow and find out what can be done. Only tell me the lawyer's name, and the name of the liar who cheated you. I must have both before I can act."

"The good lawyer is Libarius, and lives in the Rathkellers; any child can point him out to you. The other is Elshoft, the sailor, your father's nearest relative,"

"There, mother," cried Leo hastily, "now it is all clear. This is why I have never visited our cousin when I have been in Bremen. But why have you concealed this man's wickedness from me so long?"

"In order to prevent you from hating him," returned his mother. "You cannot doubt that I have suffered and shed many tears over this injustice in the silent night watches. Ah, after your father's death he should have been your protector; but the voice of nature was stifled, and you may thank your nearest relative for our bitterest cares."

Leo leaned against the post of the arbor and reflected long and silently; then he said,

"Do not despair, mother. The wickedness of men is often brought to light before the Almighty, and we will hope that God will assist us in our need, and falsehood will not finally triumph over truth, let who may decide the cause. You shall keep this house and garden as long as you live, depend upon that, mother."

The widow urged her son to disclose his plan for avoiding the blow which was about to fall upon them, but in vain. Leo was silent, only repeating his confident assurance, and raising his mother's hopes by his own confidence. Meanwhile the evening stole in upon them, and a cold wind blew from the sea; so she gathered her work together, and they returned to the house.

Leo remained quiet and thoughtful during the evening, but it was easy to see that he was forming plans for defeating the wickedness of his cousin Elshoft.

CHAPTER II.

"GOOD DEEDS BEAR GOOD FRUIT."

By the middle of the next day Leo was in Bremen; the captain of a steamboat whom he knew took his craft in tow, and consequently he made a speedy trip to the city. Leo disposed of his fish as soon as he arrived, and then repaired to the lawyer Libarius, in order to ask his advice in the present difficulty. He soon found the house, and Herr Libarius listened patiently and attentively as he explained the matter to him, and then waited for the advocate to give his opinion. The lawyer took the papers and shook his head. "The same case as happened nine years ago," he said. "I would willingly stake my life for it, the account is all false; but wicked men gain their cause; for as soon as the suit comes up, and a lie will serve them, they will utter it. My son, your sainted father cannot return from the other world to

refute this. However, I will undertake the matter for you. We do not know certainly that he will swear falsely again ; perhaps his hardened conscience may be touched, and he may give up the claim when he discovers that we are not terrified by his threats."

"No, no; he is too cautious for that," thought Leo. "It would be far better for me to pay the money," he said.

"Then in a couple of years he will come again and perhaps demand one thousand thalers, instead of three hundred," said Libarius. "This must be the last he shall wring from you; leave it to me, my boy; I will see to this cheat, and he can turn upon me if he undertakes to press his false claim."

"But a suit will cost a great deal of money, and I do not believe I can procure more than three hundred thalers."

"Do not let that trouble you, my lad," replied Libarius, clapping Leo on the shoulder; "I will bear the costs. Your father rendered me many a service with pleasure, and so far as it lies in my power I will try and help his children. Be silent on that subject,

but tell me how you will obtain the three hundred thalers demanded by this rascal."

Leo would have preferred not to explain this; but Libarius pressed him so earnestly, he at last opened his heart and confided his plans to his sympathizing friend. "One of my neighbors has told me that there is in Bremen a wealthy merchant who is now fitting out a ship for the whale-fisheries. This Melchior Rankendorf is still in want of sailors for his Arctic expedition. The wages are excellent, and I have decided to go and offer my services, if it be true that all who return from the Polar Sea will receive three hundred thalers."

"Humph!" murmured Libarius. "Love for your mother induces you to brave the ice, the cold, and the bears of the North Pole. Well, my boy, this is very good of you, and I am pleased with it; but you are too young for such a perilous undertaking; you cannot stand the dangers and trials. And besides, who will take care of your mother when you are so far away?"

"Willy, my brother Willy," said Leo

quickly. "He's a fine fellow and a very skillful fisherman, and he is almost fifteen years old. If Willy remains, my mother will be well cared for."

"But will your mother consent to your leaving her, in order to face so many unavoidable dangers?" questioned Libarius, thoughtfully shaking his head. "A voyage in those Arctic seas is no child's play, Leo, and I fear you will repent your rash decision when it is too late to help you."

"I shall not repent it, if it cost my life," replied Leo. "No, no, my good mother has already suffered so much trouble, she shall at least not lose what she loves and values most. I am strong and healthy, Herr Libarius, and my courageous heart will not fail me, at least. And if the cold be intense, and the dangers that surround me ever so great, and if bitter toils face me, still I will cheerfully bear all if I can only succeed in drying my mother's tears. I would sooner die than see her suffer. A year soon passes by, dear Herr, and if God guards and cares for me, and I trust in him, I shall be doubly happy

when I return. It is certain that something must be done for my mother, and it is my duty to do all in my power."

"Certainly, certainly, my dear boy, far be it from me to turn you aside from your duty, or reproach you for it; but I fear the sacrifice may be in vain. The voyage may be long and tedious, the ship may be overtaken by misfortunes; but if God watches over you, your life may be preserved, and I will hope that God will assist and protect you. But we must also prepare ourselves for the worst, and if you do not return you will lose the reward, and your mother will be deprived of the strong arm of her son, who might provide for her declining years."

"I have thought of all that," answered Leo, in a low, sad tone. "But," he added with more courage, "the result lies in God's hand. My will is good, at least; and if my life is taken, God will provide ways and means to avert bitter trials from my mother, and Willy my brother will never leave her, for he loves her as well as I do. I have faith in the Almighty, Herr Libarius. I can see no other

way of saving my mother from her persecutor, and so in God's name I will venture my life."

"Do you still maintain this resolution?" questioned Herr Libarius, not without emotion. "Will you bid defiance to every danger and toil, and not shun the bitter cold and terrors of the North, for your mother's sake?"

"I shun nothing; I will brave even greater hardships, if I can help my mother," answered Leo with firmness.

"Now listen," said Libarius. "I am not blessed with great riches; but see here, my lad. I make this promise: your mother shall not leave her house during your absence; you may carry that consolation with you, at least. If you should never return from the Polar Sea, old Libarius will keep his word. And now, come. I will accompany you to Rankendorf's; you are young, and might be easily embarrassed. Come, my boy, Melchior Rankendorf is a good friend of mine; you may need a bondsman, and I will guarantee your good conduct."

Libarius drew on another coat, took his

hat and stick, and accompanied Leo to the wealthy merchant's; and when they reached the house, Leo was surprised at the number of people who wished to speak with Rankendorf. Porters and clerks were hurrying to and fro, and amid all the business and bustle Leo might have lost his self-possession, and not have been able to state the object of his visit if he had been alone. Herr Libarius pushed his way through the crowd, seized his protégé by the hand, and stepped into a spacious room, where Herr Rankendorf and some of his clerks were at work. He was sitting by a large writing-table, and by turns wrote in his note-book, spoke with his business men, and counted out or took in money. In a word, he was uncommonly busy. But when he saw Libarius he let everything stand, shoved back his spectacles, and running to the lawyer, shook his hand warmly. "What wind blew you here, my dear friend?" he asked.

"A wind from the North," answered the lawyer, laughing. "See for yourself. Look at this lad; is he not a fine fellow?"

Rankendorf glanced hastily at Leo and nodded approvingly. "What is to be done with him?" he questioned. "You have brought him here with some design. Can I serve you? If so, speak out."

"There you miss the mark, my friend," replied the advocate. "But in helping this young person, you can help me, for he is my friend. He wishes to go to the North Pole and catch whales."

"Humph," murmured Herr Rankendorf, looking at Leo from head to foot. But Leo stood the test calmly, and met his glance with an open, frank and modest expression as if he would have said, "Only try me, dear sir; you can rely upon my honesty and integrity."

"A mere boy; very young, but strong and healthy," said Herr Rankendorf in an undertone to the lawyer. "We will see. You must have some interest in him or you would not have brought him here. Confess, old friend."

Libarius nodded, drew the rich man to a corner, and talked with him for some time in

a low voice. Herr Rankendorf hummed diligently, pushed up his spectacles and gave Leo many a glance, at last pressed his friend's hand heartily.

"The fellow shall go," he said. "And the amount of his wages I may as well count out now, as at any other time. Dutiful boy! Humph! Heaven will watch over him and bring him safely back; and if not, it is no matter if the expedition sinks a few thalers. Let my cashier count out the money, Libarius. And as to the fellow Elshoft, he is good for nothing, and will not escape punishment. Humph, why does Rembrant delay? Ah, here he is."

The door opened and a broad-shouldered, stout man stepped in. His face was rosy and pleasant, his eyes clear and sharp, and his gait betrayed the sailor. With respect, but also with a certain hearty confidence, he greeted the merchant, who beckoned him to approach.

"How is it with the Dolphin, Captain Rembrant?" he asked. "Is she fully manned?"

"Almost, commander," answered the cap-

tain. "Thirty stout fellows, sound, healthy boys have already promised to brave the polar dangers. We only need six more, and Martin the pilot has provided five, but we had better go without that one, than run the risk of sticking fast in the North Sea. Time is flying, the sooner we sail the better. Every day we gain is a year almost to us at this season."

"I understand. Consider that the sixth man is found, captain. Cast your eyes over there. There he is."

Captain Rembrant stepped up to Leo, and looked at him sharply. "A fine fellow, but very young," he said. "So you want to go on my ship. Have you ever been on one, my lad?"

"No, but only because I have not had the chance," replied Leo. "I could not go for I have had to take care of my mother."

"And who will do that now?"

"My brother Willy is old enough now to take my place, and in a year I will be back," said Leo.

"Sooner than that, I hope," answered the

captain. "Now, if you have the will, we can make a way. Can you go immediately?"

"I must first take leave of my mother," said Leo. "But the ship must sail directly by our house; I could join her there."

"How could that be done?" asked the captain, with a laugh. "Where is the house?"

Leo explained how it might be done, and then the captain inquired if he were fitted out for the voyage. Leo was compelled with blushes to acknowledge that besides a few garments in the wash, the clothes he wore comprised his entire wardrobe.

"And you will sail for the North Pole in a linen jacket!" cried Captain Rembrant. "Hark ye, my lad. Remain at home and keep warm by your fire, for you will freeze at the first northeast gale."

Leo blushed deeply and almost burst into tears. It was lucky that Libarius had accompanied him, for Herr Rankendorf nodded to his friend, and then turned to Captain Rembrant. "Captain, you will do me the kindness of providing whatever may be necessary for this lad on the voyage. The purchases can

be carried on board the Dolphin to-day. Let me know what they cost, and I will deduct it from Leo's reward when the Dolphin returns. I will be willing to trust him until then for everything."

"That can be done easily. But, Herr Libarius, you seem to take a great interest in this young fellow," said the captain.

"Certainly; and I have good reasons for doing so, that I will tell you of," replied the lawyer. "But we have no time for chattering now. Leo must be off to acquaint his mother with the news as soon as possible; and we, captain, must make his purchases for him."

"All right," cried the captain, "if my commander has no other orders for me."

Leo would have forced his thanks upon Herr Rankendorf, but he only remarked that every man should do what he could in a good cause; and very much pleased with his success, Libarius pressed his friend's hand and left him. The captain shook his head, and said to Leo, "Hark, my lad. I would not say what I wished before the shipowner, because I saw that he wanted to send you on the wha-

ling voyage. But now take my advice; you do not know what you are undertaking, nor can you form any idea of the trials and hardships to which you will be exposed."

"I know that it is no sport," said Leo. "But I have been on the water. No, no, captain; you cannot turn me from my decision."

"As you will," said the captain, rather shortly, "but you will repent it. Come, Libarius."

He turned his back upon Leo, but as they went on together the lawyer explained why the lad was so anxious to undertake the voyage, and the captain finally declared that he was a brave fellow, and went to work selecting the necessary articles for him, and bought a warm fur coat, which he added as a gift from himself, saying, "I will send it to him, and I think he will find it not superfluous. The lad is a fine fellow and should be assisted."

Libarius rejoiced as much over the coat as if he had given it himself. He pressed the captain's hand warmly as he said, "God will reward you, Rembrant. See here. This

is another proof that good men still live under the blue canopy of heaven. How pleased the poor lad will be when he finds that his filial love and devotion are fully appreciated. No good deed goes without its fruit, captain."

"And no wicked one but sooner or later will be overtaken and punished by a righteous Judge," added Rembrant earnestly. "Mark me, that rascal Elshoft will not escape."

"God be with you, my friend; send the goods to be put on the ship to-day, for we shall weigh anchor early to-morrow morning."

"Much happiness on the voyage, captain," replied the lawyer, again shaking the stout seaman's hand. "Heaven accompany you and bring you back in peace and safety."

The two men separated, each went his own way, and many months would go by before they would stand face to face again.

CHAPTER III.**DEPARTURE FROM HOME.**

WHILE Captain Rembrant and Libarius were attending to Leo's outfit, he flew with a light heart to the banks of the river, unfastened his boat from the stake where it was tied fast, seized the oars, and sent it skimming over the waves ; and although he was going with the tide, Leo did not relax his speed, but divided the dark water with rapid and even strokes, in order to reach home before nightfall.

In the mean time, as his boat was gliding over the waves, he considered long and carefully whether he should let his mother know all that had happened, or conceal it from her, and only unfold his entire plan to Willy at first. When he thought of his mother's tears, and the entreaties she would use to urge him to abandon his purpose, he could not bear to disclose all to her, and he decided to remain silent on the subject. He could not stay at

home ; he must leave her in order to preserve her home ; and besides, as he had promised to go on the ship, nothing should prevent him. And yet the question arose, "Am I right in going without obtaining her consent?" But the consciousness that he was trying to do what was for the best comforted him ; and as he had been acting on his own responsibility for several years, and his mother had been satisfied with him, he hoped she would not blame him in this matter. She would get over the first sharp pain of separation, the voyage would not be so very long, he might return before Christmas, and the result of the enterprise would console her for the parting.

Leo no longer repented his decision, and as he drew nearer home he became more determined to let his mother hear of his departure through Willy. As he went into the room his mother and brother were sitting near the table, mending their nets by the light of the lamp. It was a peaceful picture of quiet domestic life. As his eyes rested upon it, a feeling of sorrow came over his

heart as he said to himself, "This is the last evening I may ever pass with them."

His anger rose fiercely against the man whose greedy avarice was driving him from his little home out into the world, perhaps to death. But his hatred subsided, and his heart beat higher with no ignoble pride when he thought that he was ready and willing to make the hardest sacrifices in order to preserve his mother's comfort and happiness. This consciousness gave him strength to meet them with his ordinary composure, and he greeted his mother with the consoling words, "Fear no more, mother. My plan has succeeded, and our persecutor will be powerless."

He pressed Willy's hand, and then seating himself between his brother and mother, he related how he had sold his fish, and that the good lawyer had promised to look out for their interests, and see that his mother's rights were protected. He said nothing about himself and his intention of starting on a dangerous voyage the following day; but the sorrow of the coming separation weighed

down his heart, and he sank in quiet reflection, which was only broken by a chance word from Willy or a question from his mother. Then he spoke carelessly, and laughed and joked, in order to conceal the bleeding wound in his heart; but the sharp eyes of a mother could not be deceived. She remembered the strange tone of his voice, and scanned his features earnestly, but she was silent, thinking it better to defer her questions until they were alone. Perhaps he did not wish Willy to hear what was disturbing him, for that something worried him she could not doubt.

At last the hour came for retiring. The tall cuckoo-clock called out monotonously ten o'clock, and his mother rose. Leo also stood up. He rushed to her, kissed her tenderly, and said in a low voice, "Bless me, mother."

"Ah, my son!" She placed her arms around him. "Certainly; but, Leo, you are concealing something that troubles you."

"Yes, mother," answered Leo, "but makes me happy too. To-morrow at this hour you

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Willy sprang up immediately, and a few moments later stood in Leo's room.

"Brother," said Leo, "we must go out on the water. I beg that you will go down to the shore immediately, and I will soon follow you."

Willy complied, wondering to himself why his brother had not made his preparations the evening before, as he did usually; and Leo, writing a few farewell words on a bit of paper, folded it and placed it in his belt, in order to give it to Willy to hand to his mother when he returned home. Then he went to the room where his mother was sleeping, perhaps lost in loving dreams, and certainly without a suspicion that it would be a long time before she would again see her son. As he approached the door, he hesitated and listened. She breathed calmly. Leo felt his heart failing, and he was impelled to open the door. Lightly, very lightly would he creep to the foot of the bed, in order to carry the last impression of his mother's features upon his memory. Already his hand was stretched towards the handle, determined to

carry out this wish. But no; what if his mother were to question him as to what had led him there at that unusual hour. Should his last words to her be a lie? No, that must not happen! The memory of his home should be without reproach; he must look back upon a blameless record. Again he knelt and implored the blessing of heaven to rest upon his beloved parent, and then kissing the threshold her feet had so often trod, he murmured, "Farewell, dear mother!"

He rose, passed his hand over his eyes, composed himself, and with a noiseless step went out of the house. He lingered a moment by the grave of his father, and then turned resolutely towards the sea, over which streamed the golden rays of the sun, and with quick steps ran to the shore. Willy was ready to push the boat from the land. Leo silently sprang in, seized the oars, and turned the prow towards the open sea.

"Brother, shall we not cast our nets here?" said Willy, at last breaking the silence. "This was a very good place day before yesterday."

"No, Willy, I did not come out to fish this morning," said Leo, rowing farther out.

His brother glanced at him a moment in wonder, shook his head, and then dipping his oars again in the water, sent the craft on farther towards the open sea. Suddenly Leo threw down his oars, and said, "I have changed my mind, Willy. My last business at home shall be devoted to the interests of my dear mother."

"You speak very strangely to-day, brother," said Willy. "Your head must be a little wrong."

"You will soon learn and comprehend all," answered Leo. "Now to work."

Willy said nothing, and silently proceeded to cast out the nets without asking another question. After obtaining what they wished, Leo let the boat float on the waves, and holding his head on his hand looked thoughtfully over the water, and then suddenly asked, "Is it not true, Willy, that you love mother as well as I?"

"There is no doubt of that, you may be sure," replied Willy.

"And if I were no longer with you, would you not stand by her and care for her, as we have always done together?"

"I would have to work very industriously to stand in your place," said Willy simply. "But you will not leave us, brother?"

"I must, I must," cried Leo, with great earnestness, in order to dismiss every objection of his brother's. "Listen to me, and then you will see that I must go."

Willy drew in his oars also, and let the boat drift as it would, noting only his brother's words as Leo related clearly what he had learned from his mother in the arbor, and how he had planned to disappoint the wicked design of their cousin. "Now decide, Willy, whether I have done right," he asked, as he closed the narration. "Your heart will tell you if you can dare to blame me."

Willy looked frankly in Leo's face, and answered, without hesitation or doubt, "You have behaved nobly and well. I praise you for it, and if you were not older than I, I would take your place; but I see you have the advantage in this matter. God will go

with you ; his blessing will not fail. And have no anxiety on mother's account. If I am not as strong or skilful as you, we shall not want for the necessities of life, for I will be twice as industrious."

" But what will mother say if I leave her without bidding her farewell ?"

" She will weep, Leo. She certainly will shed many tears, but her blessing will rest upon you," said Willy. " And depend upon it, I will console her as well as I can, and when the first pain is over, she will love you more than ever. You have done right. I envy you your good fortune, but still I have this consolation, I can be useful when you have left us."

" Certainly, Willy, if I am serving mother in doing this, the greatest help comes from you, for without you I could do nothing at all," replied Leo. " But now I can go with a light heart, for you approve of my design, and can aid me by the work of your hands. If I only knew that mother approves of my plan ! This worries me, Willy. If I thought that I was adding to her care and anxiety by

going away, my courage and strength would desert me."

Willy shook his head and looked thoughtfully towards the house in the distance, that shone like a polished shield on the declivity overlooking the sea.

"Brother!" he suddenly exclaimed; "if you were certain that mother's blessing went with you on the voyage?"

"If I only knew that in my heart," interrupted Leo, "and that she knew I was fulfilling my duty as a son—"

"But, Leo, if you only knew?"

"How can it be known, Willy?"

"Oh, it is very simple. The idea came suddenly into my head as I looked back towards our house. Leo, as soon as you are on board of the Dolphin, I will row home, relate all to mother, and if she thinks as I believe she will, I shall take a great white sheet and fasten it to the peak of the house. Such a banner can be seen for miles at sea, and when you spy it fluttering in the wind, you can believe that it sends a thousand greetings and good wishes for you from mother."

"That 's a splendid plan," cried Leo, his eyes flashing with joy. "And you will promise not to deceive me, Willy?"

"No; I think that would be wrong," said his brother. "Let us row nearer to the land, so that as soon as you are on board the Dolphin I can succeed in my plan. The sooner the flag is hoisted, the better for you."

"You are right;" and Leo seizing the oars, they both sent the boat swiftly over the waves.

"And when you tell mother, give her this note. I have written my farewell in it. Do not forget it."

Willy placed it in his pocket, promising Leo to carry out all his requests conscientiously; and now the two lads talked of what was uppermost in their hearts—of the dangers that might overtake Leo in his perilous journey, and the joy of his return. They also spoke of what could be done for their mother during his absence, in case she was disturbed or distressed by their cousin Elshoft. The lawyer had promised to befriend them, and Willy must seek his advice if necessary.

With this conversation the time passed, until they reached a convenient spot near the shore, where the Dolphin would necessarily pass. It was almost noon, and they expected to see the ship every moment ; but an hour passed away before the white sails were seen in the distance, coming nearer and then vanishing behind the forest-covered heights of the land, following the bends of the river until finally the form of the ship became defined distinctly, sailing like a graceful swan upon the bosom of the water.

“ Now is the time,” murmured Leo sadly. “ We must run nearer.”

They seized their oars, and a few moments after, their boat was by the side of the whaler.

The brothers embraced. “ Farewell ; God protect you,” said Leo in a trembling voice, as he tore himself away from his brother. Soon he stood upon the deck of the Dolphin, leaning against the taffrail, and waved a last parting to the little skiff. Willy dashed a tear from his eyes, turned the prow of his boat toward the shore, and rowed

with all his might. When he reached it he looked back at the Dolphin, whose white sails were flying over the glittering surface of the water.

“Willy waved his handkerchief, and murmuring, “God bless you, my brother,” he ran on to the house, with quick steps and a hopeful heart, to relate all to his mother.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PILOT.

LEO was still watching his brother, when Captain Rembrant clapped him on his shoulder and exclaimed, "Welcome on the Dolphin, my lad. Do n't get down-hearted, With the help and blessing of God, we will see them all again in a few months; or, if you repent this hasty step, it is not yet too late to turn back."

"No," said Leo, "I do not regret it. If I have the firm conviction that I am doing right, I cannot repent this step."

"Well done! I welcome you again, and hope as long as we remain together you will honestly do your duty. Follow me to old Martin, the pilot. I have predicted that you will become an able seaman and a good whaler, and I cannot do better than give you old Martin as your teacher. Rough and harsh he is, it is true, but a braver seaman never trod the deck of a ship. Come, my lad."

The captain led the way. Leo followed, until he stood by the side of a broad-shouldered, undersized man, every inch a seaman. Rough enough he was, certainly. He wore a coarse pea-jacket, and a low-crowned felt hat shaded his broad, honest face, and under it twinkled his sharp gray eyes. His cheeks and brow were as brown as mahogany from exposure to the weather—the sun of the tropics and cutting cold of the polar regions; and his toilsome struggles, of which Leo could have little conception, had left deep furrows in his features.

As the captain approached with his young charge, Martin glanced at him, and then, with a good-natured laugh, offered his hand. “Now, lad,” he said, in a deep, bass voice, “you will also become a sailor, as your father was in his time. I knew your father; we made several voyages together. For his sake and your own, for the captain has told me something that speaks well for you, I will take you in hand. Understand me aright, my boy, I have n’t time to show anything to a lazy booby or a fine dandy. If you stand

under my orders, you will have as much to do as the others, and do not think I will overlook carelessness or negligence. You will have to work night and day, and not go with the crowd. If you are punctual and industrious, you will still find time for yourself. You can shirk your duties, it is true; but to be a good seaman, that is another question. Now you have heard what I have to say."

Leo did not hesitate. He pressed the pilot's hand, and looking frankly in his weather-beaten face, said resolutely, "I will work under you, Martin, that I will! and do my duty as far as possible, and if you put me out for idleness or inattention, I shall not complain."

"Bravely spoken, lad!"

Martin grasped Leo's hand like a vice. "If you are only half as good as you promise, we will be fast friends."

"I hope that, indeed!" said Captain Rembrant. "He is young, but is of good metal, without and within. Mould him well, Martin; and you, Leo, see that you do not dis-

grace your master. There, my boy, you need not speak ; I know what you wish to say, and I will believe it beforehand. Do not be afraid of Martin ; if you have a good will, you two will get along very well together."

The captain gave him a friendly nod and left them.

Leo remained standing near the pilot. He looked around him, but was soon lost in deep thought, and old Martin, for the time, paid no more attention to him. Leo glanced back towards the shore, it was receding farther and farther in the distance. He looked for his mother's house, and soon saw it, shining like a polished shield, beyond the water.

"Ah, mother !" Now, perhaps, she had learned all, and was stretching out her arms to detain her son, who was being carried farther away from her each moment. Her eyes, dimmed with tears, sought to forgive him ; but her voice could not reach him, and Leo now bitterly repented having taken his departure without her consent. He looked for the white signal Willy had promised to wave from the peak of the house, but his search

was not successful, and his heart grew heavier and heavier. If his mother would not forgive him, if she could not overlook the hasty and rash step he had taken in order to spare her trouble and sorrow, if instead of blessing, she should show her displeasure by preventing Willy from sending the white message!

Long and wistfully Leo looked at the distant house. "O mother!" he sighed; "I only left you to save you from the persecution of a pitiless man. Forgive me for doing what I thought to be my honest duty."

Again he looked, and looked until the tears came in his eyes, while he prayed softly and earnestly that God would give peace to his mother's heart, and take away the heavy doubts and fears that oppressed his own.

With full sails, the ship glided over the water, as a bird cutting through the air. The land receded farther into the distance, but still the white house could be seen, a solitary point, over the green waves. But it must soon disappear, and with it, Leo now realized, his peace of mind.

"Lad, why are you gazing back at the land?" questioned the pilot, placing his heavy hand on his shoulder. "It will be an ill voyage if the body sails with the ship and the heart remains at home. Forward! Forward, my boy! What a man undertakes he must enter into with body and soul, for you will have need of both."

Leo turned his glance from his home. He bit his lip, to conceal his emotion from Martin's sharp eyes; but Martin saw the starting tears, and frowned.

"Listen," he said roughly, "weak-hearted mother's baby, afraid of the voyage to the North Pole. That needs courage and a brave heart. You had better have considered all this before you came on board of the Dolphin."

"I am no baby, Martin," replied Leo, "and if you knew what worries me, you would be milder."

The expression of the old seaman's face changed as he questioned Leo, and when he confessed the cause of his depression, Martin said, in a kind voice, "That is another thing,

my lad. It is said that everything succeeds with God's blessing ; but if the mother's blessing is wanting, much is wanting, indeed, and no wonder your heart is heavy. Now, now, lad, something may yet be done. We can see the house for an hour or so more, and that is a long time. Go, fetch my spyglass ; perhaps we can discover something with that."

Leo ran off quickly, and asking a sailor where he should find Martin's bunk, soon brought the spyglass.

"So, lad," said Martin, "that's it. Now take the glass and look through it carefully. We will not give up hope, for a mother's heart is a treasure-house, filled with the best stores."

"So—that is right, and if you discover anything, let me know, and we will enjoy it together."

Leo placed the spyglass before his eye and peered through it, for news from the little house which enclosed all that he held most dear in this world. He saw it clearly, with its silver-white walls, and the green grapevines which formed the drapery for the

windows. Plainly, in spite of the distance, he could distinguish everything, even the point on the roof, and it seemed to him as if he could see his mother sitting by the window, in the black dress which she had worn since his father's death. But really that might only be the shadow of a dark tree, which fell on the clear, glistening pane. Leo's hand trembled, and he sent a thousand loving greetings to the shadow. But the white sheet—where was it?

It was not there, and the ship was sailing farther and farther away, and the point was growing smaller to the eyes of the anxious boy. In a short half hour the little white house would disappear behind the horizon, and the thorn pressing into Leo's heart would remain there for a long time. He began to feel the gnawing of the worm that men call remorse, but he still hoped, though scarcely a breath of hope remained. His cheeks were white, his hand trembled, and he murmured sadly, "O Willy, if you had not thought of this signal, I would at least have been left in doubt, and have had during my voyage the

consolation that I was trying to do my duty; but now I seem to feel conscious that my mother's displeasure rests upon me."

"I cannot see it, Martin," he said, handing the glass to the pilot with a trembling hand. "The house has vanished behind the waves, and all hope is gone."

His voice gave way as he uttered the last words, and old Martin, taking the glass from him, placed it before his own eyes. He laughed to himself.

"The land rat! the land rat!" he muttered. "I have seen water all my life, and have been well soaked in it. My boy, the white sheet is floating yonder."

"Can it be? Is it true, Martin?" cried Leo, doubtfully seizing the glass again, with heightened color. "I saw no sign of it just now."

"Your eyes did not look far enough, my boy," replied Martin, laughing heartily. "There it flutters and waves over the sea, like an admiral's flag. Be quiet, be quiet. If your hand trembles, you cannot recognize it through the glass."

Leo, indeed, was trembling like an aspen leaf, and his fresh, red cheeks were blanched white as linen. But he endeavored to compose himself as he rested the glass on the railing in order to hold it firmly, and as he looked through it again, a smile of joy lightened his face. "It waves! It flutters! Ah, my mother has forgiven me, and her blessing follows me! Thank God that she approves of my undertaking!"

Old Martin rubbed his hands together with pleasure and looked at his young charge with great interest. Leo's eyes were still fastened upon the fluttering white sheet.

"Yes," murmured the pilot. "The feelings of men are always the same. It was just so with me when I left home thirty years ago. I was fourteen when I saw my home for the last time. Thinks I, 'My heart must break, and will break.' But it did not, and hard work is the best comforter and cure for homesickness. Ah, can you no longer see it, my boy?"

He turned to Leo, who had taken the glass from his eyes. "Now we are over the

line, but if you will climb to the top of the mast you may catch another glimpse of the flag which does you so much good to see. I do not object to it. You cannot help me now, and the heart of a young lad who is leaving home and mother for the first time must have its rights. Run, lad. There will be no one there to disturb you if you please to hold a conversation with yourself."

Leo did not hesitate to avail himself of this permission from his fatherly friend, for in this light he already regarded old Martin; and he had soon ascended the mast, and watched the shore through the glass until the sea, earth, and sky, were blended in one line, and nothing could be discerned but the immeasurable water, the blue heaven, and from time to time a bird darting with outspread wings over the glassy billows.

Leo folded his arms as he sat for a few moments in quiet thought. Perhaps he raised his heart in prayer in this solitary place. He passed his hand over his eyes, and then said to himself, "Enough! From this time my strength shall be devoted to my duties,

and only in quiet hours will I think of home, mother, and brother. Old Martin may look like a polar bear, but his roughness is only on the outside. My standing here in this place is the safest assurance of his kind, noble heart. Never shall he have cause to complain of me."

He threw one more glance in the direction of home, then closing the spyglass, he descended lightly, and soon after stood by old Martin's side with clear eyes and frank face as his good friend greeted him with a rough, but well-meant grasp of the hand.

CHAPTER V.

THE LISTENER.

THE wind was favorable, and the Dolphin sailed on gallantly over the water, and Captain Rembrant thought it would matter little that the season for starting on the whaling-voyage was a little later than usual, for in a couple of months, if winds continued favorable, they might steer for home with a full cargo. Old Martin was in a good humor, and the sailors were cheerful. Leo was active and obliging, and Martin was not wrong in believing that work and constant industry would banish every shadow from the heart of his young friend. Martin and Captain Rembrant were not alone in the good opinion formed of Leo. The good-natured and pleasant lad soon made friends among the crew, and only a few regarded him with mistrust and jealousy, envying him the favor shown by his superiors. Leo did not pay them back in the same coin, but was pleasant and good-

natured to every one, and the fatherly affection displayed by old Martin made him more zealous in his service and doubly anxious to please him.

One night it happened that Martin and Leo were keeping watch on deck at the same hour. It was a clear, peaceful night. The moon was glittering in the sky and lighted the sea with its streaming rays, and the waves dashed against the prow of the *Dolphin* as she cut through the water. In spite of the high latitude the air was mild and refreshing, and there were no dangers to fear. Martin sat near the wheel, his eyes roved carefully around, and as he could discern nothing to cause any alarm, he called Leo, who was leaning over the railing of the vessel lost in thought, and made a place for him by his side.

"There, rest a bit, my lad," he said in a friendly tone. "The night is warm, the moon clear, and the ship is sailing splendidly. The others will keep good watch, and it is a fine night to spin yarns. Let me hear what brought you on board of the *Dolphin*. I

have heard this and that from the captain already, but now I would like to learn the whole story from you."

Leo was very willing to relate all to the pilot, who had proved to be a kind friend both to his parents and himself, and he therefore made no attempt to conceal anything from him. While he was speaking, one of the sailors, who had been walking to and fro on the deck, seated himself close by, where he could hear every word Leo uttered, although he appeared to have only thrown himself carelessly upon the block to gain a little rest. He leaned his head back upon his hand and turned his face towards the water, in order to conceal his design by his indifferent attitude, while Leo and Martin continued their conversation, unconscious of being overheard. Indeed all the world might have heard, for he only spoke the truth. So Leo related the story at full length, and Martin listened attentively and without interrupting him until Leo mentioned that after the death of his father his partner had asserted that the wrecked vessel was not owned equally, and

that the widow Bertram had no written proof to the contrary.

At this old Martin sprang up. "That is the worst thing I have heard of old Elshoft!" he exclaimed. "I know the whole story, because I had command at the time of the *Uranus*—the name of the lost ship, and had taken your father's place. I knew him well, as I have often said, and when he was ill he begged me to take his place until he became well again. That I could not do, for I was engaged as pilot for a ship bound to the East Indies, and it was then that your father said he was only responsible for half of the value, and could not do as well for me as he would have done if he had been the sole owner. It is plain the knave has lied to your mother. Shameful! Disgraceful to steal all the dependence from the orphans and widow!"

"Ah, that could have been borne," said Leo; "but he wishes to extort more money from my mother, and that is the reason I have taken service on the *Dolphin*."

"And how could the rascal do that?" asked Martin, sitting down again to listen.

Leo related what we already know, and Martin, who was usually a mild-tempered man, allowed himself to become so excited that he uttered an angry curse against Elshoft.

"God forgive me!" he exclaimed quickly; "but this is enough to break the thread of one's patience if it were as thick as the anchor-cable! And so, after treating your mother so shamefully, he would also drive her from her only place of refuge! Now see, my lad. You were willing to sacrifice yourself for your mother's sake. That will bring you credit, but your courage and resolution shall be rewarded. If God only permits me to return to Bremen, the rascal shall give up his plunder, as true as my name is Martin and I am an honest man. We will see if he dare deny to my face what your father affirmed in his presence. We will see about it. He dare not bring his witnesses against me. He shall give back pound for pound, penny for penny. Only patience, my lad, patience. God has led you on board of the Dolphin in order to bring the truth to light,

and the voyage to the North Pole will not be in vain. We will unearth this fox; he shall not only disgorge the plunder, but pay the interest for the bygone years."

"Good Martin, that need not be done," replied Leo. "The rascal is already tracked, and the lie will be uncovered, if possible, for Herr Libarius has done all that he could to secure my mother's rights. Every one saw that right was on her side, but this was not sufficient; the law decided in favor of the cheat, he laughed in his sleeve, and brought in papers and witnesses to confirm his falsehood."

"We will see! we will see!" answered Martin confidently. "If we show that the right is on your mother's side, God must stand by the right. It would indeed be wonderful if the word of an honest seaman is not held better than that of a well-known liar, or any heap of papers he may swear to. Misdeeds cannot always remain concealed. God is watching over wickedness and injustice, and the day will come when the timid will be ashamed of their fears. Patience, Leo; God

will bring wickedness into clear daylight, if the lie has been buried in the deepest depths of earth."

Leo shook his head doubtfully; still he did not gainsay old Martin, but thought it blessing enough to have obtained the position on the Dolphin, and averted misfortune from his mother in time of her necessity.

While Leo and Martin had been engaged in earnest conversation, the sailor who overheard every word rose slowly, and paced to and fro on the deck as before, without having been particularly noticed by either of the speakers.

"So it is all right, is it?" he muttered. "I will see that this disgrace and shame does not become discovered. Miserly my father may be, but he is no liar; and yet he served the widow a mean trick. Why did he not leave her in peace, and not root up the old story for a beggarly three hundred thalers? The avaricious miser!"

He crossed his arms over his breast, and leaning on the railing looked absently in the distance, but no eye could see what was in

his soul. He was busy with thoughts and plans which carried him far away from his surroundings. An hour passed away, and when it was time to change the watch, Martin turned around sharply and spoke to a sailor, who was then sitting on the coil of ropes.

"Hark! Who kept the first watch with us?"

"Ernest Bohme and Conrad Elshoft," said the sailor.

"Conrad Elshoft! Note that fellow," said old Martin, turning back to Leo. "If he is his father's son, he may feel disposed to play us some kind of trick."

"But I cannot believe he is," said Leo. "Old Elshoft is rich, and would not send his only child on such a perilous northern voyage, unless he would let him go in order to fit him for the command of a vessel."

"Very good. It may be so. The fox is wretchedly miserly, and it is the fashion now to go to the Polar regions. He may intend to send a ship there. If fortune be favorable, it would pay well. Depend upon it, he has

not sent his son with us to learn the trade for nothing. If we are lucky, next year he may send out a ship, and place his son on it as captain or pilot. If not successful, at least nothing is lost, and the boy has his reward of three hundred thalers. This is his way of reckoning, for one egg is like another, and the old proverb says, 'The apple does not fall far from the stem;' the son probably is no better than the father."

"But would Captain Rembrant have taken the fellow if he had known that he was old Elshoft's son?" questioned Leo.

"No, the captain has not imagined any underhand dealing. We will call the fellow here and question him."

"That will be useless if he has overheard us," said Leo. "But how could he hear it? He was sitting near the capstan."

"Still foresight is necessary in all things. Come, my lad," said the pilot.

Martin rose, crossed the deck, and Leo followed him. Conrad, who saw them approaching, remained quiet and appeared to pay no attention until Martin called to him.

"Ho, fellow! You seem to keep your watch sleeping."

He sprang up, and rubbed his eyes as if he had really been overcome by sleep.

"Take care," said the pilot sternly. "If it happen again, you might get the cat as punishment. What is your name?"

"Conrad Elshoft."

"Where born?"

"Hamburg."

"Hum! Only good seamen come from there," muttered the pilot, "though they may degenerate. Hold better watch hereafter. I will overlook your offence this time. Always keep your eyes open, and remember we are not on the land."

Conrad made no reply, and Martin turned to Leo. "It is better so; our whole voyage would have been spoiled if old Elshoft's son had been along—for me, at least. Aid will come, my boy. Go to your hammock now and sleep soundly; we have chatted enough for one day, I think."

Leo quickly disappeared below deck, and Martin again took his post at the wheel.

"Yes," he muttered, "I was too suspicious. The fellow was really asleep, for he was not prepared to deny it. I need not fear him. Woe to old Elshoft if God carries us back to Bremen safely!

While Martin was so confident in his predictions, Conrad shook his clenched fist at him, and said with bitterness, "Take care, you people. You shall not rob my father of his money, nor of his honor, if he be innocent. And if he be not! But he must surely be. The very doubt of it is terrible." He was silent again, and sank, deeply absorbed in his own thoughts, until the next watch relieved him of his duty.

CHAPTER VI.

CONRAD ELSHOFT.

How wonderful is the human heart! Its feelings are vacillating as the wind, and driven to and fro by impulse, if not regulated and guided by principle. Conrad in his hammock was agitated by conflicting emotions. He was not devoted to his father with deep affection, and yet his disgrace and dishonor tortured him, and he had heard him accused and condemned without being able to utter one word in his defence. He hoped, at least, that he was innocent of the crimes of which he was accused, but dared not deny them, because his conscience softly whispered that Leo had right on his side. The voice of nature was not dumb; it commanded him to honor his father, although he could not esteem him highly. Until now he had believed him to be only avaricious; must he believe him also to be dishonest and the oppressor of the widow and orphans? He struggled to

defend his parent, for he would share a portion of the disgrace; and whatever may have been his faults, Conrad was not quite indifferent to honor and shame.

In his first impulse of anger, Conrad gave himself up to hard and revengeful thoughts. "If I should prevent Leo and Martin from returning to Bremen," he said to himself, "there will be no witness against my father, and the disgrace will be averted." But how could he hinder their return? He thought of violence, but shuddered at the crime, and dismissed it from his mind. His hands should not become stained with innocent blood, which would make him miserable for time and eternity. Far better bear the shame and remain innocent, than commit a crime which even repentance and prayer could never repair. But how could he?

He turned and tossed restlessly in his hammock, and the morning dawned before he reached any decision. At one time this thought flashed upon him: that could he in the future make amends for what had been done in the past, he might throw himself at

his father's feet when he returned to Bremen and beseech him to restore what he had taken from the widow, and thus make amends for his father's sin, and Leo and Martin would forget the past.

But ah, these good thoughts soon vanished from Conrad's heart, and the idea was abandoned. "Father will not do it," he cried; "money is more to him than the esteem of men and the misery of his own child."

Conrad did not speak without experience. He well knew the avariciousness of his father; his harsh treatment had compelled him when a lad of fourteen to leave home and bind himself out as cabin-boy on an East Indian vessel. During a long absence from home his father had not cared for his fate, and when he returned, five years later, he was soon driven from home, and forced to make his own way in the world. When he was older, as his father discovered that his son did not need his assistance, a reconciliation had been brought about, but still there was not and never could be any warm feeling of affection between the parent and child. After a short

residence at home, Conrad had again entered service as sailor, and with changing fortune had at last succeeded in getting on the Dolphin. Here he hoped to earn a little money as capital, which in time might serve to make him independent of his father.

But this plan would be hopeless if the elder Elshoft was proved to be a rogue after the Dolphin's return. The son of an acknowledged rogue could not hope to succeed. No one would trust him or engage in business with him. Conrad in vain turned over ways and means to ward off the impending blow. He was not especially dishonest by nature, however he might be changed by his hard life, and no one could predict how he would turn out when disgrace and infamy stared him in the face. At last he determined to cling to the hope of his father's innocence.

Conrad might have chosen a better way, by believing in his parent's integrity as long as possible; and if his guilt should be proved, he could declare that he had no part in it, and make amends by giving back with his

own hands the widow's share. This would clear him; no reproach could fall upon him, and his conscience would be pure before God and man. But Conrad was cowardly; he dreaded the contempt of his comrades, and believed if one told a lie he must stick to it. He hoped that fate would assist him in some way. Whale-fishing was a dangerous business; the ship might be wrecked, and Martin and Leo perhaps by some disaster lose their lives; or an accident might prevent them from returning to Bremen. So he decided to let the matter rest for the present, and to act as circumstances permitted.

He remained silent, and attended punctually to his duties, but not with the heartiness and cheerfulness displayed by the other seamen, and especially by our friend Leo. He was silent and distant with his companions, and in spite of their jokes and jeers they could scarcely force from him a single smile.

CHAPTER VII.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

AFTER a long but fortunate voyage, the Dolphin at last arrived at the whaling ground. It was now necessary to keep a sharp lookout, not only from the deck, but from the masthead, and often the sailors swarmed in the rigging in order to catch a first glimpse of the dark back of a whale in the water or see it spout. Leo was no idler. In the universal excitement he hung from morning till night on the ropes, and searched with eager eyes far and wide over the water, scarcely taking time to appease his appetite. He would snatch a few mouthfuls, and again with great dexterity climb to the top of the mast, and laughed at old Martin, who warned him against his temerity.

"A rash lad," he muttered to himself. "He will shortly be one of our best sailors. Captain Rembrant will not regret taking him on board the Dolphin. I really have as

much pride in him as if he were my own son. Only let us see how it will be when we go for the first whale. Nimble and strong enough he certainly is, but we will see, we will see."

So far fortune had appeared to favor the Dolphin; but now it changed. Weeks passed away, and not a whale could be seen, and not for a moment was the watch for the huge monsters neglected. Captain Rembrant grew dissatisfied, old Martin grumbled, and the joyous spirits of the sailors seemed to have deserted them. Another week passed by, and then Captain Rembrant went to Martin, shook his head, and said, "It cannot go on this way much longer, Martin. Our time for returning is very near; scarcely a month is left before the ice will enclose us, and leave us to winter at the North Pole, and all that the Dolphin has accomplished will cost a smart sum of money!"

"Very true," answered Martin; "but what can be done? The sly fellows will not show themselves; they must know that we are looking out for them."

"I have thought of a plan that will save us from returning to Bremen empty-handed," said the captain. "You know all the world will laugh at us if we do not have at least one fish on board."

"Very true ; but the rascals will not let us even see them, captain."

"I think that we can steal a march upon them, instead of diving about here and there, hoping to come across them. Waiting makes many fools. What do you say about sailing towards Spitzbergen?"

Martin looked at the captain with undisguised amazement. "Ah, that is a daring undertaking at this season of the year," he said.

"We could turn back after we reach the more open sea," continued the captain. "Nothing venture, nothing have, Martin."

"Yes, and a bold venture is half won," said Martin, who also began to think of sailing farther north. "We shall certainly find whales there, and after they are on board, spread every sail, turn back in time to avoid the icebergs. Well, captain, old Martin has

nothing to say against your plan, but we dare not hesitate long."

"Forward, then! Turn the helm, my old sea-bear!"

Martin with his strong hand seized the spokes of the wheel, and turned the prow of the Dolphin toward the north. The sails were properly set, and away sped the vessel over the glimmering waves. Every sailor knew that it was dangerous at this time of the year to sail farther north, but not a man murmured, and the captain's orders were received with cheers and hurrahs, for all the stout hearts were eager for a struggle with the monsters of the deep, and they considered the danger as nothing compared with the mortification of returning home with empty hands. Old Martin's face, indeed, grew serious when he consulted the calendar, which reminded him that the season was already far advanced, but he banished his forebodings, and muttered, "Nothing venture, nothing win. And surely we are only doing our duty to our worthy Herr Rheder, in whose service we are employed, and heaven will help us."

A strict watch was kept up constantly, still no whales were seen, and Captain Rembrandt grew more and more anxious as each day passed by, and one evening he said to his pilot, "It is useless ; our luck has deserted us. We can only believe that it is the will of Providence, and turn back."

"Not until we see the sharp peaks of Spitzbergen," said Martin. "No one shall say that we shirked our duty, and if we fail then, we will console ourselves that it is God's will, and turn homeward."

"I well know that is your opinion, captain, and you will leave the decision to me ; but you do not know old Martin, if you think his heart is not in the right spot at the right moment. Yes, captain, we must see the top of Spitzbergen, and then we may perhaps find the success that seems flying from us."

The captain looked carefully at the heavens, and reflected upon the position of the sun, which was sinking beneath the sea. "The days are very short," he said, "but so be it, we will not turn back until we see Spitzbergen, if we have to sail through ice-

bergs first. Keep the prow towards the north."

Martin did not leave his post until morning. The ship was exposed to many dangers during the night, and now great floating icebergs sailed by them majestically, and were still more frequently met as they approached the polar regions, resembling vast solitary islands, driven away from their foundations by the winds and tides. When morning dawned, the sea was again clear, and in the extreme distance could be seen the icy point of Spitzbergen, and there was no fear of that becoming loosened from the fetters that have chained it for a long period of time.

Martin called Leo to him, placed him by the wheel, with orders to stand by it firmly and steadily, while he went below to snatch a little sleep. He bade Leo waken him if any icebergs floated very near, and Leo promised to carry out his directions faithfully while his friend enjoyed a rest after his long night watch, though old Martin would not have closed his eyes but from sheer necessity. But his feet had scarcely touched the

stairway when a loud cry rang out from the top of the mast, and a joyful voice shouted, "Whales! whales! A whole school!"

"Where?" cried the pilot, the thought of sleep all vanishing at the sound. "Where, Hans?" he called, as he came quickly up the stairs.

"In the northwest. Two, three, five, seven," shouted Hans. "They are spouting the water like fountains. And, oh, pilot, five more in the north. Hurrah for the spoil!"

The rest of the crew, who had been roused from their hammocks, joined in the general cry, as they rushed upon deck.

"Hurrah, boys!" exclaimed the captain. "Out with the harpoons; swing the boats from their fastenings. There's a whole herd of the jolly fellows. We will soon see what can be done. Hurry up, lads."

A scene of indescribable excitement ensued, all running to and fro, some lowering and springing into the boats from the deck, others throwing in the ropes and harpoons, while others drew on their coats, ready for starting at the first word of command.

"We have seven boats, captain," said Martin quickly. "Three of them can be kept in reserve by the boys. I will take charge of two, the others under Pilot Barte and Boatswain Korp; they are good harpooners. And Leo, quick in that boat. To-day we will see what you have learned."

Captain Rembrant willingly agreed to Martin's suggestions, and Martin, with Leo, jumped in the best boat, which was ready for departure. Away flew the light craft, as the sailors dipped their oars in the water, and the rest of the stout men selected by Martin arranged and fastened the ropes to the sharp harpoons, while Leo recalled the instructions and suggestions he had received from the pilot. His face glowed, his eyes sparkled, his heart beat high, but he listened with attention to the orders given by Martin, and tried to imprint them upon his memory.

"Keep close by my side, and if you see that the whale cannot escape, use your own skill and judgment, but watch well, my boy, that you do not get entangled in the ropes. It would be an unfortunate thing if the rope

should become wound around you when a harpoon is driven into the back of a whale, for you will be lost beyond hope in that case. The greatest care is necessary."

Leo listened attentively, and now the boat was within a cable's length of the whale.

"Now, Leo, mark well how I make the assault. I must direct my aim as near as possible. Attention! I see a fellow whose acquaintance I intend to make."

Martin was standing in the boat's bow as he spoke, the harpoon was in his hand, his left foot was planted firmly before him, as he paused a moment and considered the position of the monstrous fish, which was floating freely and unsuspectingly in the clear waters, without the least fear of the approaching boat. He drew a long breath and raised his hand, armed with the harpoon.

"Now, children," he said breathlessly, but with confidence in himself, yet in spite of his self-command his voice trembled. "On, a boat's length; if possible, get nearer. There, a little more to the right, so that he cannot strike the boat with his tail. Heaven help us!"

He raised his armed hand a little higher, hesitating, while the crew watched him with breathless interest, dividing their attention between their pilot and the whale. Suddenly he hurled the harpoon into the black side of the animal as if it had darted from the mouth of a cannon. The sharp point of the steel-edged weapon pierced deeply into the whale's back, and its handle quivered some seconds from the force of the blow, as the boat drew back out of reach. Old Martin's features relapsed into a grim smile, and seizing the rope quickly he muttered more to himself than to the crew, "This fellow shall not escape, and we will not turn back to Bremen with empty hands."

There was no time for other words, for the whale had no sooner felt the blow than he struggled to escape. He elevated his tail high in the air, and struck the waves with such monstrous blows the report was like the sound of a cannon. It was well for the boat it had escaped the blows. Now a stream of blood and water, thick as a man's arm, issued from the nostrils of the whale, which darted

below the surface with lightning-like swift-ness, to hide in the sea beyond the reach of his enemies. But it was useless for him to try and save himself by flight, the harpoon was so carefully secured to the rope, and this was unwound from the windlass with such dangerous rapidity, the rope smoked and threatened to catch fire.

"Sprinkle water on the cable," shouted Martin, seizing a second harpoon, in order to have it ready when the whale again rose to the surface.

One of the sailors sprang forward to obey the command, while the others rowed towards the spot pointed out by the pilot, where the animal, when he needed air, would probably reappear. Several minutes elapsed. In breathless silence every eye was waiting for the whale's reappearance, all hands were busy keeping the boat as near the animal as possible. Leo drew near Martin, and kept a sharp outlook for the chances of the chase.

The whale rose again only a few rods from them, and plunged about in the water violently. The sailors needed no further orders ;

they rowed towards the immense creature, and another harpoon, hurled from Martin's hand, sunk in his back. Leo threw down his oar, seized a harpoon, and sprang upon the edge of the boat to follow Martin's example. The harpoon flew and struck the whale, but just at that instant the boat gave a sudden lurch, Leo stumbled, and falling overboard, sank with a cry in the whirling waters.

There rose a general outcry from all the sailors but one, who sat silent and white in the back of the boat. No sound escaped through his half-opened lips, although his face expressed the utmost horror.

"What has happened?" cried Martin in a loud voice.

"Leo is overboard!"

The old pilot, whose face had been glowing with excitement, grew pale as a freshly-whitened wall.

"Good heaven," he cried, "then the poor lad is lost! But no, let the whale go to the bottom; a man's life is worth more than any money. Back, men! Cut the ropes if the fish drags us on."

It was fortunate for Leo that he had gained the affection and good will of his comrades, otherwise they would not have relinquished their chances for success in the chase in order to rescue him. The boat was turned, the whale again disappeared beneath the water, while every eye sought for the missing lad, and his friends needed no spur to urge them on in this work. As the waves subsided, a man's face rose from the deep, pale, with wet hair clinging about it, and Martin without hesitation plunged in. In a few moments he had reached Leo's unconscious body, and holding him with one hand outstretched over the water, swam slowly and safely to the boat. None of the sailors now showed more zeal and interest than the one who seemed most deeply affected by the accident. As Leo was drawn into the boat he burst into tears, hid his face in his hands, and murmured some words which no one could understand. Leo before many minutes came to himself, and shook the water from his dripping brown curls.

"I am all right, Martin," he cried to the

honest pilot, whose face now beamed with joy, as he saw his young friend before him safe and apparently uninjured by his accident. "See here, the next harpoon I swing shall not fail an inch less than the first. Where is the whale?" cried the boy.

"Ah, if that is the way you speak, then we will see to the stout fellow again," laughed the pilot. "But enough of the harpoons; now we will lay on the lances. On with the boat, boys; and you, Leo, be careful; you have found out that this is no child's play."

With these words Martin looked anxiously around for his half-conquered enemy.

"On we go," he shouted. "The line is running out fast. We have won; our danger is over, unless he should turn."

The old pilot's words acted like a charm upon the sailors; they went to the work with fresh zeal, and the boat sped over the water rapidly. In a few minutes they reached the spot where Martin supposed the whale would reappear. He was right in his surmises; the wounded fish rose to the surface, and a large circle around him was dyed with dark red

Blood, mixed with oil, which spurted like a fountain from his nostrils. On flew the boat, and soon Martin and Leo buried their lances in the already half-exhausted creature. The death-struggle of the huge animal was terrible. He lashed the crimsoned waves with his tail so violently that the water rose in great waves, and the noise was alike deafening. It was necessary for the sailors to manage the boat with the greatest skill in order to avoid the blows, which would have shattered it into a thousand pieces. But the brave crew kept up the assault, and the whale soon discovered that his only refuge would be in flight. He attempted to dive down deep beneath the water, but had to return often to the surface to breathe, his efforts becoming weaker each time. Once more he rose, a hollow gurgle issued from his opened throat, then with a great tremor he breathed his last.

Three loud cheers rang out from the sailors, announcing the victory, and a white flag soon fluttered in the wind. This could be seen from the Dolphin; and the pilot, well

satisfied with his success, said, as he wiped the perspiration from his brow, "Now, my lads, we have made a master-stroke. Without doubt this will bring the shipowner one thousand thalers, and you have honestly earned your reward. Now, what do you say? Shall we carry this to our comrades, or renew the attack while that fellow yonder is resting on his fins?"

The men, whose zeal had been kindled anew by the success of the chase, wished to continue it.

"I thought so," exclaimed Martin. "Well, so be it, if you will."

With a loud hurrah the sailors seized their oars, old Martin directing them to row towards the boats which had been kept in reserve during the attack. Meanwhile he carefully examined the harpoons and lines, laying aside those that were damaged and useless, and when he had an opportunity he asked Leo what had caused him to fall overboard.

Leo could not account for his accident, and the other sailors knew no more about it

than he. One sailor remained silent on the subject, until old Martin, turning to him, said, "Elshoft, you were sitting behind and could see what happened; tell us all about it."

"I know nothing," answered Elshoft hastily, and his cheeks were blanched white as he spoke; "I was only looking at the whale. I did not notice Leo as he fell overboard."

Old Martin gave him a long, searching glance. Elshoft turned his head away to conceal his emotion.

"I will keep a sharp eye on him," thought the pilot. "I believe the fox knows more than he confesses."

But this created no suspicion among the crew, every one supposing that Leo had lost his balance and stumbled, while Conrad's conscience whispered to him the petition, "Lead me not into temptation, and deliver me from the evil thoughts that constantly assail my heart." But he did not make it his sincere prayer. Strength from heaven alone could shield and strengthen him against the bitter, revengeful suggestions presented by Satan. A scarcely perceptible motion of the boat

had thrown Leo from his balance; whether this was intentional or accidental no one knew, only God above, "who searches the hearts and tries the reins of men." If the temptation offered itself of freeing himself from Leo by this opportunity, probably he also knew that Martin would plunge after his favorite, and both possibly might be lost beneath the waves. The diving of the whale at the time saved them, but whether Conrad really rejoiced at this, who could say?

The men again went heartily to work, and in a few moments were engaged in another scene of terrible danger. Two of the largest whales were secured, the others found safety in flight, and no one thought of following them, for they already had enough to keep them busy for that day in carrying the spoils to the ship. Ropes were fastened to the tails of the monsters, and they were towed to the Dolphin, where preparations were made to secure the valuable cargo. Two days were spent in carrying the blubber and bones on board. No one could think or talk of anything but the adventures of the chase, and

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not a man would listen to turning back towards home, although the season was far advanced, and the ice-floes they saw warned them that there was danger of the ship's becoming imprisoned if the winter set in suddenly upon them. The sails of the Dolphin were spread, and with a good wind she sailed still farther north.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BEAR-HUNT.

IN the succeeding three weeks the Dolphin remained anchored off the coast of Spitzbergen. Seven whales had been taken, and the ship had now a full cargo, and Captain Rembrant announced his determination of starting for Bremen the following morning, after certain necessary repairs had been attended to, for the ship had not escaped some damages during her voyage. Every heart was light, the Dolphin had been remarkably fortunate, and no one doubted but that they would all reach home without any further accident. A few of the sailors were busy calking and repairing the ship, others were engaged in carefully stowing the cargo, and only a few were idle. Among these were Martin, Leo, and Elshoft, whose services were not needed just at that time.

Martin was speaking with Leo of their success, and of the joy of Leo's mother when

her son should come back in safety to her dear home and her loving arms.

It was a clear, cold day. The sun stood in a cloudless sky, and the rays of light glanced on the sharp, ice-covered summits of the nearest island, which glittered like diamonds, and objects miles distant could be seen distinctly through the transparent atmosphere. Leo looked attentively at the surrounding country, which, in spite of its barrenness and solitude, was not without its attractions. He rested his eyes upon the fields of ice, then on the creeks flowing through the crevasses of the jagged island, then upon the snow-decked mountains that reared their silver-bright summits in the blue heaven.

"All dead, barren, and unprofitable," he said. "No blade of grass adorns this wild scene; no tree waves its green crown in the breeze; no bird sings on the hard, stiff-pointed rocks; no butterfly sports in this barren clime. Nevertheless it has its own charm, and shows the skill and power of the great Creator."

"Certainly; that is true, my boy," said old Martin. "Nothing is without beauty that comes from the hand of the Creator. And do not believe that all nature is as dead as it appears to be. Amid this wintry barrenness living creatures are creeping. The bear roams over the icy surface seeking its nourishment; the seal and walrus are on the coast; foxes and wolves bid defiance to the northern winter, and even birds are not wanting, although they have not the brilliant plumage and the blithe song of their southern brothers. Eider ducks, seagulls, stormy petrels, and great white north owls, have their haunts among these rocks, and the polar sea swarms with an incredible number of fish. Yes, my boy, we find God's care over everything; and where we, with our short sight, only see slumber and death, there is life and motion. There, do you see the shaggy figure of a bear on yonder ice?"

"I see, I see," said Leo, holding his hand above his eyes to protect them from the blinding sunlight streaming over the glittering ice surface. "And see, Martin, a young

one is creeping after her. Ah, Martin, if it were only possible to capture them!"

"Humph! It might be," said Martin, as his sharp eyes followed the movements of the creatures. "If they only dared to venture on that ice-field, where we could cut off their retreat, it might be done. The ham of a bear is not so bad, and the skin would be a good thing to take to the shipowner. If we could keep out of his scent and make the attack, we might capture both. Captain Rembrant, a word!"

The captain, who was superintending the carpenter's work at the other end of the ship, came forward quickly. "What is it, Martin?"

"Leo and I have discovered a bear. If we attack him, he can hardly escape, and it can be done in an hour. What do you think? It would give us furs and provision."

"I have nothing to say against it, only we can ill spare the men. I do not see the beast. Where is he?"

"Just there, in a direct line from where we stand."

"Now I can distinguish his shaggy coat from the surface of the snow," exclaimed the captain. "It is hard to tell the difference. But we need our men, Martin, and dare not waste our time."

"Leo, I, and Elshoft, are enough," said Martin, who longed for the hunt. "We can take harpoons in the boat, and will return in two hours with the old and young one."

Captain Rembrant yielded. He went to the cabin, brought out three good rifles and some powder and balls. In the meantime, Martin lowered the best boat, sprang in, and seized the oars. Elshoft threw in the weapons, he and Leo jumped in, and the boat was on the point of starting when Captain Rembrant called, "Martin, you had better remain. There are some gray clouds gathering in the sky, and I fear we will have a snow-storm before we are three hours older. See, the sun looks dim."

Martin looked at it sharply and shook his head. "Say no more, captain," he said; "we will be back before the bad weather comes. It's hardly a sea mile."

"Throw in some furs, in case you need them," said Captain Rembrant. One of the crew obeyed this order, some wolves' skins were thrown in, and the boat rowed toward the point, which they reached within an hour. The bear did not appear to notice them at all, but walked unconsciously over the field of ice, in search of food for herself and young.

"They shall not escape us," said Martin, as the boat shot around the point, and was close to the ice-bound shore. "Quick, Elshoft, get out the harpoons, and, Leo, you take care of the ammunition and rifles. So, make the boat fast to the ice. All right. Now, children!"

Each of the three hunters took a loaded rifle, and carefully following Martin, who was reconnoitring, Leo and Elshoft stopped when the old pilot hesitated.

"There she comes. She is looking for a seal. Wait a bit, Bruin. You will soon lose your appetite if we can only get a little nearer and get a good shot. We must take the head or breast for our mark, and do not fire, boys, until we are sure of our prey. On no

account injure the young one ; if the old one falls, he cannot escape. But do not fire until we are fifty steps nearer. Should she scent us, and probably she will, for their scent is very keen, stand and await her attack, and fire when she is twenty feet from us ; first Leo, and then you, Elshoft, if necessary ; but I do not think it will be, for she will fall at the second, if not the first. Now on, and Heaven help us."

They went on, but were not entirely around the point, when Martin stopped suddenly. "I have thought of a better plan," he said. "One can never predict what may happen on a bear-hunt. It would be better to have the boat in reserve to fall back upon, in case of an attack. Do you remain in it, Elshoft, and Leo and I will go on, and you fire, if you find it necessary."

Elshoft made no objection ; he returned to the boat, carrying some of the ammunition and his rifle, and promised to keep a good watch, while Martin and Leo, with their rifles cocked, and the harpoons trailing behind them, advanced, with heads bent down,

to the place where the bear stood, watching for a seal to rise from the hole for a breath of fresh air. She had not seen them, but now, when they were within one hundred feet of her, she suddenly raised her head, and sniffed the air. With a short, deep growl she turned to her young, as if to shield it from danger, then opened her mouth and uttered a loud roar, displaying her blood-red tongue and double row of sharp, pointed teeth.

"Down! down, my boy!" whispered Martin. "She has not seen us yet. Perhaps we can creep nearer to her. There, she turns away, and the young one plays around her as cheerfully as if there were no such things as guns and powder in the world. A moment more, then we can go forward."

Martin and Leo remained motionless on the ice, while the bear resumed her former position, and turned her back upon both. The young one followed, tumbling on the ice, rolling here and there in the snow-drifts, from time to time uttering sharp cries.

"That little animal is our best ally," said

Martin. "Take care, Leo, do not tread upon the brittle ice; it will crack and betray us. Follow my footsteps."

With care the hunters followed the bear up the height, and then dropped upon their knees, avoiding the unsafe spots, and trying to keep a snowdrift constantly between them and their prey, which would serve to cover their advance. They succeeded in doing this for thirty feet without arousing the bear's attention.

"What is it?" whispered Leo.

"The little beast is close by us. I have a mind to shoot. A young bear is often duller than a sheep."

The two hunters remained motionless, and the young bear, which had discovered them, stared at its pursuers. They slowly crept nearer, and when within three feet, it still remained staring and growling.

"The little beast will bring the old one around our necks," said Martin, "if we do not silence him. We can do nothing else. Give me the harpoon from your belt, Leo."

Leo obeyed; but scarcely had he put out

his arm, when the little animal, to whom their neighborhood now seemed to be disagreeable, turned away, growling fiercely.

"Now it is all up, you may be sure," said the pilot, "There she comes!"

Old Martin was not wrong. The old one turned, and spying the two men, howled ferociously, as they awaited her attack. Leo was somewhat alarmed, as he for the first time faced the wild beast. His nerves had been overtaxed already by the new and exciting pursuit, but his heart beat courageously, although his arm trembled as he raised his weapon, aiming for the head of the bear. On she came, until she was within thirty feet distance, then she stretched herself, and rising on her hind feet, opened the blood-red mouth and struck her fore-paws wildly in the air.

"Attention!" cried Martin; "I will shoot. If she does not fall, fire; but do not be too hasty, Leo."

"Rest assured, Martin," said Leo, with confidence, although his cheeks grew white; "I would not desert you if I died ten thousand deaths."

Martin hesitated but a second, then the report of a rifle sounded in the still air, and a blood-red stream issued from the shaggy hide of the bear, showing that his aim had not missed. The animal sank on all-fours, stumbled a moment here and there, and then summoning her strength, sprang suddenly upon Martin, who was felled to the earth by the powerful shock.

"Shoot, Leo," he cried, "shoot, or we are both lost."

Leo mustered all his courage as he approached the bear, who had now fastened her claws upon Martin's breast. She looked up at her new enemy with rolling, ferocious eyes. Leo fired; the animal sprang back with a wild growl, and shook her bleeding head. Leo's ball had hit, but he could not decide if it had been fatal. Martin, recovering himself, rose quickly, with his wits still about him, and taking the harpoon, hurled it at the bear with all his might. The wounded beast raised another fearful howl.

"Now steady, Leo; she cannot last long, for she stumbles; hold the harpoon ready."

Leo seized it, expecting a fresh attack from the animal, and Martin, snatching up an empty rifle, resolved to use it as a club, if necessary. But to every appearance the animal had no desire to renew the combat. Calling her young one, who had been behind her during the contest, she turned her back upon the two hunters and slowly walked away.

"Now we are safe," cried Martin joyfully. "Load the rifle, Leo, and after her quickly."

"Shall I not call Elshoft to our help?" asked Leo.

"No, no, we can get along without him; but call to him that we want the boat. Now forward, or our prey may escape us."

Martin started while he was speaking, and ran with short steps over the snow. Leo followed, and in a few moments they had overtaken the bear.

"She is weary and crippled by the loss of blood; she cannot hold out much longer," said the pilot.

They redoubled their speed, always keeping the prey in sight, when suddenly she disappeared.

"She is off," cried Leo.

"Yes, but we will find her again," answered Martin.

In a few moments they reached the place where the animal had disappeared, and Martin uttered an exclamation of surprise as he noticed an opening in the ice-wall through which she had made her escape. This was plain from the bloody tracks in the snow.

"She has escaped, but we must not let her outwit us; she cannot be far off," said Martin.

Leo hesitated; he cast an uneasy glance at the sky, which meanwhile had become overcast with thick clouds, the sun had vanished under the dimness, and the Dolphin could just be seen through the thick gray fog. Leo silently pointed this out with his finger.

"There is nothing to fear," said the pilot, as he glanced at the ominous signs. "So long as the wind is right and the snow does not fall, we need not dread the fog. We will venture on a little way, and then there will be time enough to turn back. If we cannot carry the bear with us, we can at least take the skin."

They started on without further delay, Martin overstepping his usual prudence in the eagerness of the pursuit, and Leo following with a troubled heart. He would have detained the pilot willingly, for he felt a premonition of coming evil, but he feared that Martin might consider him wanting in courage, and no consideration would have induced him to leave his friend; so he followed close upon his footsteps, hoping that the wounded bear, from pain and loss of blood, would not be able to travel much farther; and indeed, after five minutes, they succeeded in getting through the chasm, and emerged in an open space. Martin uttered a joyful cry when he saw the object of their search again within reach. She lay stretched out on the snow, which was dyed on all sides with blood, and her young one howled and jumped anxiously around its parent. She now made no effort to elude her pursuers. As they advanced she attempted to rise, but her strength was spent, and a well-aimed shot from Martin's rifle ended her sufferings, and she was lifeless.

Martin threw a noose around her as she lay helpless and powerless on the earth, the knives were instantly out, and the two men went hastily to work, when Martin looked up suddenly, and then bent his head on one side. Leo also stopped his work and looked with surprise at his companion, whose features expressed anxious apprehension.

"Do you not hear something, Leo?" he asked.

"Certainly—a strange howling in the distance. It seems to be coming nearer. It may be nothing but a wind-flurry passing over the ice-fields, and caught in the clefts of the mountains."

"God grant that you may be right," said old Martin; "but no," he added with a pale face, "this is no wind-flurry. Hark! hark! how it comes howling on! The sky is darkening. Merciful Heaven! there is a snow-flake! Away, away, lad! Leave everything! Gather all your strength, so that we may reach the boat and save ourselves. Away as quickly as your feet can carry you!"

No words were needed to spur Leo on,

for he knew as well as Martin that this snow-storm might cost them their lives, if they were not under the shelter of a roof. If they succeeded in reaching the boat, it would serve to protect them. By turning it upside down, and crawling beneath, they could sit like snails in their house, while the weather might rage and fret as it would. With this shelter and the warm furs which they had brought, the storm could be defied, and even the intense cold which accompanies a snow-fall in the polar regions. If Elshoft had only rowed to the designated spot, and assisted them as a faithful comrade! Without speaking a word, for it could not have been heard amid the howling of the sudden storm, Martin and Leo ran through the narrow valley, whose high icy walls fortunately served to protect them from its fury. As they emerged from it the snowflakes fell less thickly, and it seemed as though what had so suddenly come upon them would as suddenly subside.

"We are saved!" said Leo, breathing heavily. "The air is quiet and the sky is clear."

"On, on, my lad," exclaimed Martin. "These are deceitful signs; it is only a pause for the storm to gather new strength, and it will soon break upon us with greater fury, God grant that Elshoft is waiting in the boat!"

With redoubled speed they ran forward, and in a few minutes reached the edge of the ice-field, and looked anxiously for their companion. But no trace of the boat was discovered as far as their eyes could see, and Martin ground his teeth together to conceal his agitation. "We are lost, my poor lad! Why did I bring you to this?"

Leo looked out over the coast at the sea, and a faint cry of hope trembled on his lips. "See there, Martin. There is the boat on the sea, and Elshoft is rowing towards the ship with all his might."

The mist, which had been resting thick and heavy on the water, lifted for a moment, and Martin saw the boat plainly. It was still within the reach of his voice, and the pilot, holding both hands before his mouth, in order to make his cry louder, called out in a thundering voice,

"Boat ahoy! Boat ahoy!"

Without doubt Elshoft caught the sound, for he turned his head toward the receding shore, and resting his oars, seemed to be reflecting as to what he should do.

"The rascal will desert us," said Martin, "in order to save his own pitiful life; he leaves us to our fate, though honor and duty call him back."

"But hark! What is that?"

A low murmur echoed over the sea. Soon another followed, and after a short time, a third.

"They are the signal guns, calling us to the ship," said Leo.

"Yes," added Martin bitterly; "and yonder villain understands them as well as we, for he runs away faster and abandons us to our fate; but retribution will overtake him when he least expects it. But come, every moment is precious, my lad. We must return to the bear, and wrap ourselves in the skin, if possible."

They hurried towards the chasm, and had scarcely entered it, before a new storm burst

upon them. The snow fell in masses, and it became suddenly so intensely cold, the breath was frozen as it came from their mouths, and a freezing numbness stiffened Leo's less hardened limbs. "I cannot go on," he said, staggering and leaning against the ice wall for support. "Save yourself, Martin, and leave me to my fate."

"With God's help, I will not," said Martin. "Here, lean on my arm, and struggle onward."

Leo endeavored to proceed, but at each step his limbs refused their service, and he sank down fainting and powerless.

"Mercy upon us!" exclaimed Martin. "What can be done? Leo, you must go on, or in a few moments you will be still and dead."

"Then leave me to die," stammered Leo, "for my strength is gone."

Martin threw a wild, imploring glance towards heaven, and wrung his hands. "No, no," he murmured to himself. "I will not leave you. You must go on. God will give me strength."

He bent down towards Leo, drew the half-frozen boy on his shoulders, and started afresh to run through the valley and breathless and exhausted, succeeded in reaching the spot where the bear was lying. He tore off the hide, wrapped it around Leo, himself, and the young bear, and soon felt that his young friend was returning to life.

Leo sighed, and asked, with returning consciousness, "Where am I?"

"In safety for the present, at least," said the old pilot joyfully. "The bear's hide and the young bear's warmth have saved us. We lie here covered and warm, and the little fellow gives out as much heat as a stove. Only patience, Leo. Things will go wrong sometimes, but all may yet be well, if this weather does not continue, and the Dolphin is not torn from her anchor. The cold and snow can do us no further harm."

Indeed, our friends had nothing more to fear from the weather, so far as their bodily wants were concerned, although the fearful commotion of the elements could be distinctly heard by them in their place of refuge, and from

time to time a terrible cracking, as if the foundations of the earth were shattering. It was impossible for Leo or Martin to explain the noise, which would have sounded above the roaring of a hundred cannon. They afterwards learned that these horrible sounds were caused by approaching icebergs, which had been uprooted by the raging waves, torn from the shore, and precipitated into the sea with the shock of an earthquake. Leo and Martin listened with anxious hearts, and awaited the quieting of the storm; but many hours passed by before they ventured to leave their place of retreat, and work their way out of the thick piles of snow that were heaped over them.

THE BOAT.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BOAT.

WHEN Martin and Leo had been enclosed in this living grave for twenty-four hours, the pilot awaked from a kind of stupor, for it could not be called sleep, and sat up. Something had startled him. He roused himself, but all was still.

"Are you awake, Leo?" he questioned. "A fox has just now awakened me."

"I am awake," replied Leo, who had been disturbed by the movement of his friend.

"It seems to me the foul weather has passed over," continued the pilot; "at least, I can only hear the breathing of our young bear, who is still comfortable and warm under her mother's skin. Let us make a search and creep out of our grave, Leo."

Martin, groping around in the dark, soon found the end of the hide, and unwound himself from it. He tapped the snow with his

outstretched hand and endeavored to push it one side. This was difficult, for it was very fine and dry, and would not pack readily, but scattered like sand when Martin pushed it aside. Leo came to his assistance, and with their combined efforts, they succeeded in working through several feet.

"Immense masses of snow must have fallen," said Leo impatiently. "Shall we not come to daylight soon?"

"Patience," answered Martin; "I can see already a faint glimmer which can only come from the sun. Yes, there it is. But how cold!"

Cold indeed as ice was the air which streamed in through the opening. Martin quickly withdrew his hand, less willing to leave his warm bed. "But this is foolishness," he murmured to himself, after a short pause. "If we would find the Dolphin, we must get out, and be quick about it."

Again they began their work, with new zeal, and in a short time emerged in the open air. The change from the thick darkness of their place of shelter to the clear sunlight re-

flected on the dazzling surface, blinded them, and it was some time before they could open their eyes, and then they saw nothing before or around them but a white stretch of snow, and behind them, in the distance, the jagged peaks of Spitzbergen, towering like terrible crystals, towards the blue sky. The valley or chasm through which they had escaped and found the bear's hide, had entirely disappeared, and there was nothing left of the open sea but a small stream in the distant south. The whole space was filled with great ice-floes floating—solitary icebergs, which had been driven hither and thither by the storm, and then suddenly frozen together in immense masses by the intense cold, while over all the snow had spread a sheet of dazzling whiteness.

The pilot stood in dumb astonishment at the wonderful transformation. "What has become of the *Dolphin*?" he exclaimed. "If the storm has driven her to the south, we are lost beyond doubt."

"That would be terrible," murmured Leo, in a trembling voice. "Oh, my poor mother.

what will become of her when she believes that I am lost! But no, Martin, we must not give up all hope. If Elshoft succeeded in getting on board of the *Dolphin*, Captain Rembrant knows that we are still living, and will wait for our return. We must go over the ice-field and get a sight of the water."

Martin shook his head sadly. "Entirely impossible! You would sink knee-deep at every step, and it would take a whole day to reach the point you wish. No, abandon that thought, for we should soon sink down overcome with fatigue, and die of hunger and starvation. Also, do not, dear Leo, hope that Captain Rembrant can wait for us to return. The polar winter is here, and every moment's delay only threatens surer destruction to the ship and crew. God alone can help us. Nothing remains but to summon all our fortitude, in order to bid defiance to the terrors of the advancing winter. We are imprisoned, my boy, and it is vain to hope for aid before next summer. Heaven have mercy upon us! This is a bitter trial."

The old pilot looked vacantly about him

in utter despair, while Leo, in his distress, thought more of his poor mother's anguish and sorrow than of his own hard fate, and as he pictured her in her disappointment and sadness, he sobbed aloud.

Martin regarded him with deep compassion. "Yes, my poor boy, you have a right to weep. God only knows what horrors are before us, and whether we can stand the northern winter with its endless night and terrible cold. But I declare to you, my boy, that I will care for you as if you were my own son, and may evil fall upon me if I fail to keep this promise. Whatever I can do by my advice and strength shall be done. Keep up your courage. We must not cast hope aside. With perseverance and patience we can accomplish much, if we will cling to one steady purpose. My foolhardiness brought you into this trouble, and I must make up for it if possible. If I had really known that Elshoft was as great a scamp as his namesake in Bremen, this misfortune would not have occurred; but who would have thought of such treachery? Faithful comrades cling together so long as

there is a chance of saving life. Ah, it was pitiful."

"But his own life was at stake, if he had attempted to save us," said Leo, excusing Elshoft.

"What say you, my boy? Would you have done the same if you had been in his place? No; nor I. And that is enough to condemn him. But the fox will be recompensed for this act when the time comes; and depend upon it, Leo, it certainly must come. God will punish him. Let us look for another place. We must find winter-quarters, where we will be protected from the cold. The hard months will pass away in time."

"But shall we not first look out and see if the Dolphin has not returned?" asked Leo. "Let us climb yonder hill, Martin; it is not too high, and if our ship is near we can see it."

"It is useless, Leo, entirely useless. I know already; but you shall have your way," answered the pilot, as he followed the boy in the direction indicated.

After a toilsome half-hour's travel they

reached the spot, and Martin was undertaking the ascent himself, when a call from Leo interrupted him.

“What is that, Martin?”—he pointed to a small, shapeless, dark mass projecting from the snow at some distance from them.

“It may be a bit of wreck which a strong wave has dashed on the shore; you can tell by the ice that we are standing close by the sea. We will examine it after we have assured ourselves that we have no hope of seeing the ship.”

With indescribable fatigue they both climbed the hill, and after several fruitless attempts succeeded in reaching its summit, and looked far and near, but a narrow strip of water was all that remained of the sea. Leo thought he descried a distant sail, and pointed it out to Martin, who soon convinced him that he had been deceived by a white cloud. The Dolphin had vanished, and probably by this time was far beyond their sight or reach. Leo, whose heart sank more heavily, gathered all his firmness, and said, “So be it, Martin. What God does is well

done. We have been spared thus far, and we must not murmur. Our hearts are as wax in his hand, but he can also temper them as steel. My poor mother will find peace and consolation in this hope and in her prayers to him. And, Martin, we must not lose our confidence in God, even if it be his will to abandon us on this ice-bound coast. We must still lean upon him."

"So be it, my boy," but Martin's voice trembled. "If you do not complain, an old tough sailor will stand it. But now, away from this place; the day is hardly an hour longer, and we have enough work to do before night. Let us first look at the wreck. If it cannot be of any other use, it will at least serve as fuel for the snow-hut we must build to protect us against the cold."

The two hermits, as we may now call our friends, cut off from all intercourse with the neighboring country, speedily descended the hill. This was far easier than the ascent, and in a few moments they arrived at the bit of wreck buried in the snow, which they tried to push aside with their hands and feet.

"Ah, what is this?" cried Martin, picking up a bit of fur; "how came this here, I wonder? We will soon find out if this is not a boat, instead of a broken spar or mast. Hurry, Leo; let us get it out before night."

They went on heartily with the work, which diverted them from their sad thoughts and the stinging cold. Their benumbed fingers glowed like fire, and the perspiration stood in drops on their foreheads.

"This is good exercise." Leo paused, panting and breathless.

"Certainly," answered Martin. "And exercise in the open air will be the surest means of overcoming the bitter winter cold; what we feel at present is only like the mild frost of autumn, compared with what will follow. But see! If I were not sure that Elshoft escaped with our boat, I would be willing to swear that this was it."

"It is indeed wonderfully like it," said Leo. "But all of the boats in the whale-fishery are as like as two peas. I believe that we can now turn it upside down."

"Not yet, said the pilot. "We must dig

deeper, and then it will be easier. Lend a hand to this."

They made the hole deeper, and then with their united strength lifted the boat over on one side. The heavy masses of snow still held it down, but at last the keel gave way and fell over. A cry of astonishment burst from their lips when they saw the figure of a man, partly wrapped in furs, stretched out under the boat, and recognized the recreant Elshoft. He was stiff and white, and judging from appearances, his soul had left his body.

"See, the hand of God has overtaken the miscreant in his own wickedness!" exclaimed Martin, after a pause which followed the discovery. "God is just. He ran away from honor and faith, and the Almighty throws him back upon this island in order to give us a sign that we are still remembered. Yes, Heaven is just, and no criminal can escape his righteous arm."

"But, Martin, perhaps there is still life in him," said Leo; "we must try to save him."

"Not I; my hand shall not relieve one

whom God has struck," answered the honest but unforgiving pilot. "Let his corpse lie there under the open sky for the wolves and bears to feed upon. I shall do nothing for him."

"But, Martin, perhaps he turned back of his own free will in order to help us, or at least to share our fate," said Leo nobly. "The Lord commands us to love our enemies, and this man may not even be an enemy, but a true friend."

Martin made no reply to this, and turned his back upon Leo, who immediately set about the restoration of the half-frozen El-schoft. He rubbed his face and hands with snow, and worked away long and heartily, till at last a faint sigh issued from the lips.

"He is alive, Martin, he is alive! For pity's sake lend your aid. If we leave him here helpless, our consciences would convict us of murder in the sight of God."

Leo continued his efforts while he was speaking, and saw with pleasure that his words were not lost upon Martin. The old pilot approached, it is true, with a distant and

dissatisfied expression, but still stretched out his hand to his enemy, as he considered him, to snatch him from the jaws of death. Once actively engaged, hatred soon vanished from his stout heart, and his coldness melted as the snow in his hands with which he rubbed the benumbed limbs. The sinister expression left his face, and his mouth relaxed into a laugh as he said cheerfully, "Indeed he is returning to consciousness. If it be God's will to restore him that he may repent and make amends for his sins, I will not hinder it. See, Leo, he opens his eyes! Now, then, rub his breast and his temples. Hurrah! we have him alive again!"

Under the hands of the compassionate Samaritans, Elshoft's consciousness slowly returned. He felt warmth and sensation stealing through his benumbed body, and opening his eyes, he yawned and stretched himself out as a man who wakes from a long, deep slumber. Finally his white lips parted, and he murmured, "O God, where am I?"

"Not in heaven, nor in a canopied bed, certainly," said Martin; "but I think you are

saved for the time being, and that is more than I would have believed ten minutes since. Give your thanks to God, fellow, and may you in future be a better man. But I will say nothing more now; a better and more favorable time will come. Drink this."

He placed a flask which he had found under the boat to Elshoft's lips, and with the draught new life crept through his limbs; he roused himself, his eye turned from Martin to Leo. "Is it you who have saved me?" he stammered. "I have not deserved this from your hands," he murmured.

"Certainly not," retorted the old seaman; "and if I had had my will, you would have lain there until the trump of judgment sounded, but yonder brave lad came to your rescue. There, I will not drive the probe deeper now. But when you are grateful, turn to Leo, for indeed I had no wish to restore you."

The old pilot's eyes were sparkling with gladness in spite of his severe words. Doubtless, Conrad's life was more to him now than before, for when our Lord said, "Love your enemies," he meant that the kindness we be-

stow upon them should also create a love for them in our own hearts.

Elshoft had heard Martin, but only partly comprehended what he had said. His features were agitated with contending emotions, and his cheeks changed from white to red. He looked at Leo, and then suddenly seized his hand and exclaimed in a stifled voice, "I thank you; I thank you, my noble-hearted comrade. Yes, and with God's help I will make amends for the wrong done to you and yours."

Leo returned the pressure of his hand, and Martin cried with his rough voice, "Heaven help you to stick to your good resolutions. It was a mean, knavish trick to desert us; but repentance asks forgiveness for wrong, and the next thing is to sin no more. Hold out as long as we herd together on this island, and I will say no more about this affair. A good comrade never betrays; and in sooth we have need to be good comrades, for a winter in Spitzbergen is no pleasure-party. But now forward, if you have the strength; the sun is down already,

and we must get to our old quarters before our ears and noses are frozen. The wind is coming sharp from the north, and cuts like a knife."

Conrad stood up and tried to drag himself along after Leo and Martin, but he was still too weak to attempt such an undertaking, and he sank down before they had gone twenty feet. "Leave me here, friends," he begged in a faint voice. "Wrap me in the fur, and cover me over with the boat; it will be better for me to remain here until the morning."

Leo glanced at Martin. The pilot shrugged his shoulders. "Humph! After all, the boat will be as good a shelter as the bear's skin, considering that we have found some furs here, in which he can be wrapped. If we only had the little bear here!" he added, after a moment's reflection. "The little beast is as warm as a stove. Leo, you remain here; cover that half-frozen fellow up warmly, and I will go and secure the young bear and cut a ham from the old fellow, and bring everything over here. We have eaten

nothing for twenty-four hours, and a bit of meat will not taste bad."

Leo made some objections to this plan; but Martin, paying no attention, started off without further delay, while Leo carried the helpless Conrad to the boat, wrapped him carefully in the skins, and arranged a place for him on the side, where he was protected from the sharp, cutting wind. Conrad soon fell in deep slumber, and Leo, who was greatly fatigued, buried himself partly in the snow, wrapped his fur around him, and awaited Martin's return. He was confident that he would not remain away longer than was necessary; and in two hours the pilot returned, driving the young bear, tied by a rope, before him, as if he had been a goat or a sheep, and carrying on his back a ham from the old bear, wrapped in its hide, and in his hand a rifle which he had dropped the day before and had come upon accidentally.

He drew a heavy breath as he threw his spoils in the boat, for the burden and toilsome way through the snowdrifts had greatly fatigued him.

"There they are," he said. "Now, Leo, let us put the things in the boat, and then kindle a good fire, so that we may cook a bearsteak. It can all be done in an hour, and we will sleep the better for it afterwards. Where is Conrad?"

"He is asleep." Leo pointed to him.

"Let him sleep on until we can hold a piece of broiled steak under his nose;" and Martin began his preparations without further delay. He broke a couple of oars in pieces, and with the help of a handful of dried tow and some blazing powder, he soon made a bright fire. He then cut some steaks from the bear's ham, and fastened them to the muzzle of the gun, and roasted them as well as if he had seen service as an excellent cook. Leo assisted in silence, while Elshoft still slumbered.

"I wonder why he deserted us in our necessity," said Martin at last. "It was fear; fear and cowardice, I'm sure. When he saw that the snowstorm was about overtaking us his heart sank, and he ran away hoping to get on the Dolphin in safety. He may have

thought that we should perish in our encounter with the bear, and in that case his desertion would never be known, for he could tell his own story when he was on the ship, and no one could gainsay it. But Heaven did not permit him to earn the fruit of his cowardice, for he was doubtless caught with the snow and whirlwind and thrown back on the coast. Now we will see what he will do next. If he proves honest, we will take no further notice of his bad behavior."

The pilot believed in his heart that Elshoft had another motive for his action. He did not doubt that Conrad was related to the man who had treated Leo's mother so unjustly, and whose persecution had led his son to brave the dangers of the polar sea. But Leo ascribed his flight only to an impulse to save his own life; and with his usually kind spirit began to excuse Conrad's flight, since it had almost cost him his life.

When the steak was done he aroused the boy, and the three, cut off from the society of their fellow-creatures, made a hearty meal upon their single dish, and then collecting

all their strength, they turned the boat over, crept under it, wrapped themselves in fur, and taking with them the young bear, who had also shared a part of the meal, they all slept through the long night undisturbed until the following morning, when they awoke to new toils and dangers.

CHAPTER X.

THE HERMITS.

THE glimmering rays of the sun lightened the darkness when Martin aroused his companions with a loud shout. He knew better than they what was to be done in order to prepare for the severity of the northern winter, and was not the man to yield to indolence or laziness when it was necessary to take proper precautions. He stated to his companions the difficulties that were before them. He knew the first and most important matter would be securing a safe and comfortable roof to shelter them, and he advised them to build a hut such as the Greenlanders use during their long cold winters.

Leo and Conrad were very willing to carry out his suggestion, but Conrad mentioned that during a residence in Holland, where he had seen ship-service, he had heard some sailors who had been engaged in the whale-fishery for many years speak of a hut

built of timber somewhere on the coast of Spitzbergen in this neighborhood. This, he thought, might yet be in a state of preservation, and he proposed that they should first hunt for that, which would certainly be more comfortable and protect them better than the boat or a hut of ice.

"That may be," said Leo, "but how are we to find it? Spitzbergen is a large island, and we may be dead with cold and hunger before we reach it."

After a short consultation they decided at least to investigate the southern coast, as this was the part of the island upon which they were, and the hut, if standing, would be probably found not very far away.

"Let us see," said old Martin. "If the Hollanders needed such a hut, they without doubt would select a spot which would be most accessible in summer, and protected in winter against the fearful northeast storms. This could only be done by placing the hut at the foot of a mountain lying towards the south. Look well about us. We can see two mountains from here, one on the right,

the other on the left. That one in the background is too distant from the coast; it would be foolish to settle there. My plan would have been to build directly under yonder wall of rock; it defies the northern storms, and the projection protects it from the east wind. That is the best situation here, but a position on the southern coast of the island would be better, and if I am not greatly mistaken, the shrewd Dutchmen's eyes were as good as ours. If they built a hut, they leaned it against that wall, and I advise that we make our search there. If we find it, well and good. It is a blessing from God. We will lose nothing by the search, and will only be nearer the point where we shall desire to build ourselves. Forward, my boys."

The reasons of the sagacious old pilot were so well founded and so easily understood, that neither Leo nor Conrad objected, but followed Martin without hesitation, and reached the point indicated in half an hour. The jagged sides of the ice-wall were covered with projections of ice, and here they silently began their search, Martin taking first the

angle formed by the side and a projecting cliff. But he made no discovery, and his companions, who were at a little distance, only found masses and drifts of snow which had been hurled there by the wind; and crest-fallen they returned to Martin.

"Do not be discouraged," he called out consolingly. "From the first I did not believe that the Dutchmen would have left it standing here if it had been worth taking away, for they are a very frugal and economical people. Let us think no more about it, but shovel away the snow on this side, so that we can find a foundation for our house. This is the most sheltered nook on the whole coast, and we will make use of it. Steady, my lads! By working we will at least forget our troubles."

In order to lay the foundation on the ground, they would have to dig deep in the snow; and our three adventurers were compelled to use their oars as spade and pick. They went heartily to work, and succeeded in digging a deep hole in the snow. Still they had not reached the earth, and Martin,

intent upon his proposed plan, stepped upon an apparently very thick crust of ice, in order to test its strength. He stamped on it heavily, the ice cracked and split, and with a loud cry the unfortunate man sank in the opening and disappeared!

With a sharp cry Leo peered over into the dark gulf in which his best and only friend had so suddenly vanished. He clasped his hands and remained as if transfixed into a lifeless statue. Conrad stood behind him with pale cheeks and lips. He glanced at Leo, stepped forward, and raised his hand, while a wicked voice whispered within, "The grave conceals everything; no sound can rise from that depth, and my honor would be saved before the world should he disappear with his friend!"

The hand was outstretched; one push, and all would be over. Leo was unconscious of the dark thoughts that were surging in Conrad's heart. He had no suspicion, and could have offered no opposition. His life seemed hanging at that instant on a single thread.

Suddenly, with an effort, Conrad drew himself back, fell on his knees, and murmured, "No, no, I dare not. Deliver me from evil, and save me, Lord, from myself. These hands shall not injure one who has saved my life!"

His voice trembled. Leo was not thinking of him. He had not heard the words, forced from his companion in his conflicting emotions. Leo leaned over the chasm in which Martin was buried, and with a deep groan, as the tears fell over his white cheeks, he cried, "Martin! Martin! Be merciful, O God, and restore my friend. Martin, Martin! Do you hear me?"

All was silent. No friendly voice answered the wild, anxious cry, and Leo, throwing himself on the cold, icy ground, wept bitterly. He had often heard that deep holes and chasms existed in the polar regions, covered by a thin crust of ice, which gave way under an unsuspecting foot, precipitating the traveller in the abyss. He believed that Martin was lost in such a chasm, and his heart was deprived of all hope of ever seeing him again.

In the meantime Conrad, who had recovered from his agitation, stepped by the side of Leo, and said, with apparent composure,

"Do not give way to despair; let us try to save Martin."

"Martin! save Martin?" cried Leo, springing up from the ground. "Ah, Conrad, that brings me back to life. Do you believe it possible to save him?"

"Let us try," said Conrad; "the crevice may not be very deep, and if we work hard we can dig him out. We can but try it."

Without a word, they seized their oars, and eagerly began their work. Snow and ice flew on every side. Suddenly they stopped, and held their breath.

"Leo! Conrad! My lads, are you within call?" thundered a voice from the depths, and Leo exclaimed joyfully,

"He lives! Heaven be praised! Martin is alive!" His eyes beamed with delight.

"Martin," he cried, "How can we help you? Are you hurt?"

"Only a little jarred and bruised," echoed the voice, "but my bones are not broken by

the tumble, and I have my wits about me now. How long have I been here?"

"Not long; scarcely ten minutes; but how can we help you?"

"Wait a bit, my boy, and get away from the crevice, so that more light can fall into my prison just here. I am well enough, but I cannot find out what kind of a place I have fallen into."

Leo stepped back, and waited patiently for new directions from Martin.

"O Conrad," he said, "what a blessing that Martin is not killed, for without him we should certainly perish here."

"Yes, Leo, and I am thankful in my innermost heart," said Conrad. "You do not know how, but certainly God has saved me in these painful moments, and you also, and here I resolve henceforth to keep from temptation. Yes, if I die for it."

"What do you mean? What have you done?" asked Leo, startled by the mysterious language of his companion. "What led you into temptation?"

"Sin," answered Conrad. "You shall

some time learn all, but not yet. I hear Martin's voice again. Hark!"

The shout sounded again from the crevice. Leo and Conrad rushed to the opening.

"Hear, lads!" called the old pilot. "I believe I have discovered the hut. At least I find I am surrounded by timbers, and by the faint light that falls in my prison, I believe that everything is in good condition. Ah, there is a door; perhaps I can open it."

They heard the thumping and rapping in the depths, and then again all was still.

"It will not give way," cried Martin, "I can only open it a little; the snow-drifts are heaped against the entrance. But there is no more doubt about it, my lads; this is the Dutchmen's hut, and this discovery is worth a fortune. It seems to be in good order, and I believe I fell through the opening for a chimney. Measure ten feet toward the southeast, and then dig and shovel away as if your life depended upon it. When you are deep enough, you will strike the door, and then we can open it. In the meantime, throw me down an oar; I will see what I can do."

They obeyed his directions, and Leo and Conrad dug away with all their might. It was very difficult, for the masses of ice and hard-packed layers of snow resisted their efforts, and they had no suitable implement for work. But with strength and determination, they finally succeeded in conquering the difficulties, and found, after two hours' hard labor, that they had almost reached the ground. Martin, too, was working as industriously as his young friends.

"We must now dig sideways, for we are certainly deep enough," said Conrad.

"Not yet," replied Leo. "The hut is certainly not built on the snow, and we must not venture to dig in another direction until we first strike the ground and foundation,"

Conrad saw the wisdom of the suggestion, and worked on with redoubled zeal. In a few minutes Leo stood on the hard, frozen earth, and saw that he had been correct in his surmise.

"The wall which separates us from our friend cannot be very thick," he said, and now, instead of digging deeper, they shovelled

the snow on one side, hoping to break the ice from beneath. Their efforts were soon successful. The whole ice-wall tottered, Some of the pieces bounced off, and Leo and his comrade had scarcely time to spring back to avoid the masses which, loosened, suddenly fell forward. At the same time, a door of oaken planks gave way, forced open by the pressure of Martin on the other side.

Several seconds passed before the reunited friends could see each other plainly, for they were enveloped with the snow which had clung to them; but they felt that they were again standing safely side by side, and with a cry of joy, Leo fell in Martin's arms, while the tears started in Conrad's eyes.

"O God!" he murmured, "I thank thee for permitting me to see this moment. How my conscience would have tortured me, had I yielded to the fearful temptation! Let it never again find place in my soul."

"Now, Conrad, you are glad that we are together again, safe and sound," cried Martin.

"From my soul," said Conrad, stepping

forward and shaking Martin's hand heartily. "Yes, I rejoice as much as if my own life had been saved from death."

"Then we have gained an honest comrade in you," said Martin. "I was doubtful of it before, but you have shown us the right kind of spirit to-day, and we will remain firm friends until next summer. Keep up your courage, lads. We have discovered this splendid hut, and need not fear the winter; with God's help we will stand it. The hut is a fortunate find for us; and now, as we have some daylight, we will examine it more closely."

They stepped in over the snowdrifts through the open door, and found that the hut was in a state of perfect preservation, although it had probably not been occupied for years. The accumulated piles of snow, which had been heaped upon it season after season, had only served to protect it more securely from the influences of the severe weather. They found cooking utensils, and Leo discovered a great heap of wood and coal. Doubtless the Hollanders before their depart-

ure, following an impulse of compassion, had left this for others who might like themselves be cast ashore there. The new-comers hailed it as a blessing from Heaven. The furniture was tolerably good, consisting of a table made of rough planks and a few wooden chairs. A fireplace and large stone chimney were on one side of the room, and Martin had tumbled through the latter, as he had supposed, into the hut. There were also conveniences for smoking fish and meat, which could be used again. They then decided to bring the remainder of the bear's flesh to the hut, and cut and dry the pieces, and also to kill the young bear, as they would not be able to provide food for it during the long winter. The boat, too, would be more useful near the hut, as in case of necessity it could be turned into fuel, and so that was brought up. Martin soon kindled a good fire in the stove, closed the chimney with a fireboard, which fortunately was found in a corner, filled a pot with snow, and with the assistance of his comrades carried the bear's meat to the hut. A piece was put in the pot when the snow had changed

to water; and while the supper was cooking Martin went out to execute his purpose of killing the young bear. By the time this unpleasant but necessary business was over, the meat was done, and our three exiles sat down to their simple but nourishing meal with feelings of deepest gratitude to God, by whose help they had been preserved and sustained through the day. A genial warmth was diffused through the room, and Martin laughed as he thought that there were many poor creatures in his Fatherland who had neither shelter, warmth, nor smoking bear's meat, and who would willingly change places with them.

"Indeed," he said earnestly, "until now we could not realize what toils and hardships might have overtaken us if the winter had broken upon us with all its strength, and God had not thus kindly provided for us."

"We will not predict what might have happened," said Leo. "I feel that God will protect us, for my beloved mother sent her blessing after me on my voyage. Ah, Martin, how heavy my conscience would be now

if my brother had not happily thought of the signal which served as a means of communication between my mother and me."

"Yes, it was a good plan," said Martin. "They say, 'A mother's blessing builds the children's houses,' and we will hope that your mother's will help to build our house; so we will put our trust in God, and hope that all will be well."

Conrad was silent; but that night, before he closed his eyes in slumber, he knelt and confessed all before God, and prayed for pardon for Christ's sake, and for strength to keep him in the right path, and murmured to himself, "If we are spared to return to Bremen, I will show Martin and Leo that my heart can be honest and manly. Leo has saved my life, and he shall discover that I can be grateful."

CHAPTER XI.

CAPTAIN REMBRANT.

OUR adventurers, however, notwithstanding their good fortune, led a hard life on the island of Spitzbergen. The solitary days passed in monotonous weariness, and the long nights were as dull. Their only amusement was an occasional bear or seal hunt, which brought a little change in their lives. When a favorable opportunity arrived, they roamed over the island, looking for means of subsistence. One day they found some water-cresses hidden away under the snow, in a sheltered spot. Their rifles, which fortunately had been found in the boat, were very useful, and the ammunition was sufficient to supply them for their hunting expeditions, and Martin considered the necessity for hunting as a most fortunate thing. "Without this excitement we should grow dull and listless, and if we would remain in a healthy condi-

tion we must take this daily exercise in the open air," said the pilot.

There were no forests to hunt in, so our three friends strolled about the shore, looking for bits of wrecks and fragments of wood for fuel to replenish their stock. They found sufficient, but often, after long and tiresome searching under the snow; they brought the burdens on their backs to the hut, and piled them in the partition where they had found the wood and coal.

"The more wood we have, my lads, the better for us," said old Martin, when they staggered beneath the heavy loads. "We have scarcely begun to feel the cold yet; but you will soon find out what a polar winter is, and we shall not have to wait for it much longer."

Indeed, by the beginning of October the cold was intense, and increased fearfully each day; but in their sheltered position and strong hut they were protected, and although the stove was heated until it glowed red hot, it did not warm their room thoroughly. The frost forced through every tiny crevice in the

walls; every fluid that was not standing on the fire became a solid cake of ice; if the door was opened a moment, the atmosphere congealed and was like a thick mist of snow, and fell on the floor as if it had been in the open air. Outside it was still worse. Their breath froze as soon as it mingled with the air, and they were obliged to keep themselves thickly wrapped in furs, in order to resist the influence of the piercing, cruel cold.

In their adventures they always kept together, and watched each other closely, for if the nose or ears became like wax, they knew they were frozen, and applied remedies immediately, before it was too late, rubbing the stiffened limb or features with snow for restoration. Their situation became worse when the sun vanished entirely, by the middle of October. It would not return for a long time, and they felt the need of the friendly light painfully. They had no compensation but in the comparatively dim splendor of the *Aurora Borealis* and the distant stars. When the cold reached its highest degree, they wrapped themselves in the furs, put their feet

to the stove, and dared scarcely venture out far in the open air. They made no attempt at hunting, but in order to keep up the daily exercise they ran from the hut for a quarter of a mile, and then returned quickly. It was fortunate that they had taken care to provide fuel against the day of necessity, for without it they must have perished. But one day vanished after another, until the weather became milder; and by the end of January their hearts were lighter, for although the sun could not be seen, yet the dim light was a precursor of its appearance. Four weeks later, a part of the sun was distinctly visible above the horizon, and its appearance was greeted by our friends with joyful hearts and expressions of thanksgiving.

In March they were able to resume their hunting, which was necessary in order to replenish the diminishing stock of provisions. They then succeeded in capturing a bear and several seals, so that they could dismiss all anxiety, and await with patience the arrival of ships, which without doubt would sail northwards, bound for the whale-fisheries.

In spite of their numerous privations and toils, by the favor of God they had remained in a healthy condition, having neglected no precaution and taken daily exercise. Conrad had displayed his zeal and sincerity, and once had been able to save Leo, when hunting, from the hug of a bear. The animal's embrace would have resulted fatally if it had not been for Conrad's interposition; and from that time forward Martin and Leo placed entire confidence in him.

April came and vanished; May followed. The air became mild. The immense fields of ice, which had covered the entire coast, were broken and scattered by the winds and waves, the sea was open again, and day after day the three exiles with longing eyes looked eagerly over its surface, hoping to see an approaching sail, which might prove to be the means of releasing them from their long imprisonment. They often mistook a white cloud rising in the distant horizon for the spread canvas of a ship, and their disappointment was great when they found they had been deceived by their hopes.

Birds came in flocks to build their nests among the rocks on this remote coast ; the sea teemed with inhabitants at this season of the year ; whales and dolphins sported in the waters ; but no ship gladdened their hearts, no flag or pennon fluttered in the breeze to herald their deliverance.

"They believe that we are dead," said Leo, in deep dejection. "No one asks about us, and after a while another long, dreadful northern winter will fall upon us. My poor mother!"

"Patience! Patience!" answered Martin consolingly. "Captain Rembrant is a man of honor ; he will surely at least make an effort to save us. A thousand accidents may have detained him in a voyage to the polar sea, and besides it is yet early in the year. We cannot reckon upon his arrival before the middle of June."

New hopes, new disappointments. A ship appeared on the horizon ; it was a ship, a real ship ; it could not be a deception, and our friends embraced each other and wept with delight ; but alas ! the vessel vanished in the

distance and their rejoicing was changed to sadness.

"It will never come!" said Leo and Conrad.

"It *will* come!" said Martin, with confidence. "If God spares his life, Captain Rembrant will come to our rescue."

Again and again the exiled men stood watching on the shore for a friendly sail, until the evening of the fourteenth of June, and Martin, sadly shaking his head, returned as usual to the hut with disappointed hopes.

"My lads," he said, "the time has come for us to help ourselves. Our boat is in good condition. We will carry it to the water tomorrow, and row out bravely on the open sea. Farther in the south we must certainly fall upon whalers, and we will reach one safely if God does not withdraw his aid. We can no longer depend upon Captain Rembrant, whatever the reason may be that detains him. Shall we venture?"

"Certainly, at all hazards," said Leo; "for it would scarcely be possible for us to survive another winter here on this coast."

"With God's help I hope it may not be necessary," said Martin. "We start, then, to-morrow."

If the determination to do the best in our power is made at a time of anxiety and sorrow, with a steadfast waiting upon God, the heart becomes lighter and looks more hopefully towards the future. It was so with our friends. The weariness of hope deferred and painful watching was now removed, and they slept more soundly than they had done for several nights.

About dawn Martin was roused suddenly from slumber by the sound of voices, but imagined that Conrad and Leo were talking in their sleep. He lay down again, but had scarcely closed his eyes when he again heard voices, strange voices without doubt, for immediately after some one knocked on the door of the hut.

With a loud cry Martin sprang up. "My lads, help has come in the night!" Leo and Conrad were on their feet in an instant, while the door was assailed with a shower of blows, and "Heaven grant that you are alive and

well" fell in welcome accents on their ears. Captain Rembrant stepped into the room, Martin fell in his outstretched arms, and Leo and Conrad, overcome by their emotions, wept and laughed over their unexpected deliverance, while a loud cheer arose from the sailors outside of the hut, who had accompanied Captain Rembrant in his search for his friends.

It was some time before their feelings permitted them to speak. Then came explanations and an account of their adventures, and Captain Rembrant listened in wonder as they related how they had been providentially preserved through their privations and dangers.

Leo asked about his mother and brother, and learned with a thankful heart that both were well and still clung to the hope of seeing him alive again. The captain had confirmed this by his own confidence in Martin, for he believed that if the honest pilot had escaped from the claws and teeth of the bear, he would find ways and means of defying the severe winter. He also said that Martin would be able to calculate about the ship—

knowing it would be impossible for it to return to their aid till spring—when driven towards the south by the winds and waves at that dangerous season of the year. On his arrival in Bremen he had acquainted the merchant shipowner with these unfortunate circumstances, and it had been decided that an attempt to save the exiles should be made in the spring. The vessel was ready to start by the first of March, but had been delayed by adverse winds on her voyage. He had also to say, from the lawyer Libarius, that Leo's enemy was powerless, having been summoned by death to a higher tribunal to answer for his misdeeds.

When old Elshoft's name was mentioned Conrad turned pale, but no person noticed his emotion.

Leo and Martin had also to relate how they had been overtaken by the storm, but not a word was said respecting Conrad's treachery. It was passed over in silence, for the honest sailors would have regarded Conrad with contempt if the truth had been known. Martin pressed his hand, and whis-

pered, "Never fear, Conrad. What has passed is all forgiven and forgotten, and your faithfulness has made us friends for life."

Conrad returned the pressure. "I thank you, Martin, and if we return to Bremen safely, you and Leo will find that you have in me a true friend."

In the mean time Captain Rembrant and his companions were making their preparations to return to the Dolphin. The possessions of the three friends were to be carried to the ship, excepting the wood, which was left there to save some poor castaway in the future from perishing, and Captain Rembrant promised to add a hundred weight of coal to this stock of fuel. Finally all were in the boat, which was rowed to the Dolphin. Martin was a stout and rugged old seaman, but when he stood again on the deck of the ship, and recognized all of the familiar surroundings, and grasped the wheel in his strong hand again, a thrill of joy ran through his frame, and tears rolled over his weather-beaten cheeks.

CHAPTER XII.**AT HOME AGAIN.**

ONE fine September evening, a ship with furlled sails slowly approached the coast, upon whose highest point a white house, partly covered with green vines, gleamed through its dark drapery. The ship was lying about a quarter of a mile from the land, when a boat shot from it over the water. A hearty young lad had jumped into it, followed by an older man, who seated himself in the stern, while the other, with beaming eyes, seized the oars, and dipped them in the waves.

"A happy voyage and a quick return," cried a voice after them from the ship to the rowers. "I hope to hear from you soon, my friends."

"Certainly, captain," answered the older man. "Before a week passes by, we will come to Bremen for our reward. A good voyage to you all."

A loud hurrah from the ship followed the departure; then the sails were unfurled, and the Dolphin, in spite of her heavy cargo, flew swiftly on toward the mouth of the Weser river.

The boat, which our readers may recognize as an old acquaintance, approached the shore with steady strokes, and was steered directly under the point upon which the house was standing. Its keel grated on the sand, Martin jumped out, secured it to a stake, and held out his hand to assist Leo. "Welcome home to your native land safe and sound," he said. "What a joy is in store for your mother, when you walk in and take her by surprise!"

Leo's voice trembled with emotion as he replied, "Certainly, Martin. And Willy is at home, for there is the familiar old boat in which we have been out so often fishing. Yet I tremble. If mother is only living!"

"Without doubt, my boy," answered Martin confidently, as they walked rapidly up the hill; "in a few moments you will be in her arms."

Leo panted for breath, his cheeks burned, his eyes beamed, his heart was beating with agitation at the thought of the coming meeting. All was quiet, peaceful, unchanged about the house. Perhaps the vine clambered more luxuriantly around the window. The last rays of the sun fell upon it, the door stood open, the window-shutter also was open, so that the refreshing air could enter. Leo stepped in the door, he glanced at the room where his mother was usually engaged with her duties. It was empty. He ran out into the garden. Willy was there digging.

"Willy! Willy!" he cried.

The boy glanced up from his work, and throwing down his spade, in an instant was in Leo's outstretched arms. "Safely home, dear brother!" exclaimed Willy. "How we have prayed for you! Every day mother and I have implored God for your preservation, and here you are, only taller and stouter than you were before. How delighted mother will be! Let us find her."

"Is she well?" asked Leo, almost trembling.

"Alive and well, and more proud of you than ever," replied Willy. "You cannot doubt that. Come, come! We shall find her in the attic room. She is often there at evening, looking out on the sea, and thinking of you."

They turned toward the house. Leo cried, "Mother!" for there she was, standing in the doorway, tears in her eyes, a glad smile on her lips, and a world of tenderness and love in her glance, as she held out her arms to her dear son.

"Thank God!" she murmured, as Leo embraced her. "Thank God, my dear boy, that we see each other again!"

Old Martin drew his rough hand over his eyes as he said to himself, "This is worth a winter in Spitzbergen. Such joy angels might have in heaven."

Indeed, the delight of the return was so great, that all the hard, toilsome, weary days and anxious, sleepless nights, were for the moment entirely forgotten in the joy that welled up from their grateful hearts. Leo did not forget his faithful friend, and as night

came on he related how much he owed to the friendship and kindness of Martin, and the thanks and affection of the family embarrassed the old pilot, who endeavored to conceal his emotion under some blustering sailors' jokes, until he could recover his equanimity, and with Leo describe the cares and perils they had undergone together during the winter. He lost no opportunity of praising Leo's courage and hardihood.

They shed tears of joy, mingled with gratitude, as they dwelt upon the mercy and goodness of God, which had preserved them so wonderfully in those long, tedious, dark months of exile from friends and home. Leo realized this fully, and his future would show still more clearly how his misfortunes had proved a blessing in disguise.

So we often, foolish and short-sighted mortals as we are, consider our afflictions as great misfortunes, while in the inscrutable wisdom of God they are only serving to help us to place our entire confidence and dependence upon a power and strength beyond our own. A merciful and loving God will never

place upon his people burdens that they cannot bear ; and however dark their path, there is light before them.

Five or six days passed swiftly, and one evening Martin decided that it was time for them to report at Bremen, as their leave of absence was nearly over, and he and Leo had not yet received their money. His mother anxiously inquired if Leo intended entering service again on the Dolphin, and was very much relieved when he assured her that he preferred to remain at home and return to his old employment. So the departure for Bremen was settled the following day, and Martin must promise to spend the coming winter with the family of his young friend, a proposition that he did not oppose very strongly.

The next morning, as they were sitting at breakfast, Martin, hearing the sound of wheels, ran to the window, and announced that a carriage was approaching the house. The others, in wonder, collected around the window, and to the astonishment of Martin and Leo, Conrad, the companion of their

trials and troubles, alighted. They scarcely recognized him at the first glance, for he was handsomely dressed, and his face was unusually pale. They gave him a hearty welcome.

"What wind blew you here?" asked Martin, after Conrad had been introduced to Leo's mother and brother. "I thought you were with your relatives, and here you come sailing along under entirely strange colors. I hope you bring good news."

"Good for Leo and his family, if painful and deeply mortifying to me," said Conrad, in a low voice. "I came to seek forgiveness and make amends for a wrong. But," he added, "I will make everything right. I will confess all, even if it brings your hatred upon me."

"Whoever confesses a fault and seeks to make reparation, cannot receive contempt from good people," said Martin. "Speak out freely, my lad. You have been a faithful comrade, and you can depend upon our friendship. Is it not so, Leo?"

Leo pressed Conrad's hand by way of answering.

"Now, then, hear my confession, and mildly judge a repentant sinner.

"First, I must acknowledge that I am the son of the man who defrauded you. I lied about that, for the man was my own father. I am his rightful son and heir."

Martin shook his head, Willy frowned, and his mother regarded Leo with painful anxiety; but he only said gently, "Do not judge him harshly. It was not through Conrad that we suffered; he is not responsible for his father's actions."

"That is true," said Martin. "It was not your guilt, and you need not share his disgrace. We can only pity, not condemn you, my lad."

"After my return home," added Conrad, with more confidence, "by my father's books and papers I found—yes, the truth must come out—he had defrauded this good woman. The shipwrecked vessel Uranus was insured for 80,000 thalers, and that sum should have been equally divided between my father and his partner. Receive your part," said he, handing a paper to Leo's mother.

"This is the sum, with the interest ; this paper can easily be turned into money."

They sat in silence as Conrad presented the paper. The old pilot first sprang up, and grasping Conrad by the hand, exclaimed, with deep feeling, "You are an honorable fellow. Old Martin declares this, and woe betide any one who shall doubt it. Whatever injury you may have done me in your heart, I freely forgive."

"No, hear me out ; I have not finished," said Conrad, in a trembling voice. "Another crime, in intention only, still rests upon my conscience. You remember in our first attack on the whale Leo tumbled overboard. This was my doing. I gave the boat the sudden lurch which caused him to fall. I hoped that if he were swallowed up by the waves, my father and I would be saved from infamy and disgrace. God, in his infinite mercy, prevented the accomplishment of my design ; but I am guilty of the sin, and am willing to make any reparation in my power. I will suffer any punishment."

"O Conrad," cried Leo, throwing his arms

around the penitent, "you have been sufficiently punished by this confession, and then, you saved my life in the struggle with the bear, and that was expiation. I bear no grudge against you. God, who can read my heart, knows that I esteem you more than before. No, you are not to be punished for this sin; you are exculpated by noble confession."

"So I think," said Martin. "Give me your hand, my lad. You are my friend, and shall remain so as long as I live."

Willy and his mother also took his hand kindly, and a heavy burden was lifted from Conrad's breast.

With a sigh, he said, "If you can forgive me, whom I would have so deeply wronged, I can hope that God, in his boundless mercy, can forgive a sinner. I thank you all for making me a happier man."

New assurances of friendship and confidence followed this display of Conrad's feeling, and at last Leo, taking the paper in his hands, exclaimed, "Conrad, I must accept some of this money in justice to my mother.

but take half of the sum and keep it for your self."

"I do not need it. My father, although he always appeared to be poor, left me a large fortune. I only need your kindness and good-will."

"You have that, and the future will show that it comes from my heart. Whoever repents and does right deserves kindness and friendship. And we may all thank the Lord, who was designing our highest good, even when we were in our deepest care and anxiety."

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